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BY

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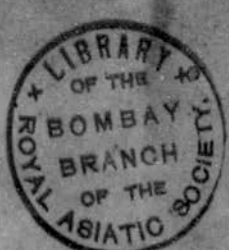

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To

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL GEORGE CHESNEY,

R.E., C.B., C.S.I., C.I.E.

AUTHOR OF "INDIAN POLITY," ETC., ETC.

MILITARY MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF THE VICEROY OF INDIA,

This Volume is,

WITH PERMISSION, INSCRIBED,

AS A TRIBUTE OF ADMIRATION AND RESPECT,

BY HIS OBLIGED AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

HAVING seen a great deal of India, from the Vale of Kashmir to the tropical uplands of Ceylon, from the historic borderland of the Indus to the forest-covered banks of the Brahmaputra, having resided in each of the Provinces of Northern India from Assam to the Punjab, and having done my best to understand the character and intellectual condition of the people of the country, I trust the sketches of Indian life which I have embodied in this volume may prove acceptable to readers who take an interest in the *two hundred and fifty millions* of Hindus and Muhammadans in India, so frequently alluded to in contemporary writings.

Of the inner life of a people who adhere to the rigid rules of *caste*, and keep their women in seclusion, it is not, perhaps, possible for an alien to form a just opinion; and this difficulty certainly exists in regard to the entire upper and middle classes of the Indian world, whether Hindu or Muslim. But the common people, more free and open in their domestic arrangements, afford better opportunities for observation, and I have not neglected the chances which

have come in my way of gaining an insight into the mode of life and habits of thought of the humbler ranks of the community. In Part II. of this volume I have recorded, from personal knowledge, many particulars connected with the somewhat peculiar domestic life of the lower orders, which may help English readers towards accurate conceptions regarding the lives and ideas of many millions of men and women in British India.

J. C. O.

LONDON,
10th January, 1889.

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I.

YOGIS AND MAHATMAS, THE SAGES OF INDIA.

"The brooding East with awe beheld
Her impious younger world.
The Roman tempest swelled and swelled,
And on her head was hurled.

The East bowed low before the blast,
In patient, deep disdain:
She let the legions thunder past,
And plunged in thought again."

A SWOLLEN river rushing brimful, with rapid and audible current, past town and hamlet, past field and forest, is a sight that has attractions for most people. And the old *Hydraôtes* of Greek geographers —the Ravi—big with the melted snows of the Himalayas and the rain of the wide plains of the Panjab, is as good a river to watch in flood as many another; so on a Sunday in July I took a drive from Lahore to see the rush of water by the bridge of boats, for I knew the river was pretty full at that time. Passing the European cemetery and the Taksali gate of the city, my way lay behind the stately mosque of Aurangzeb, with its marble domes gleam-

ing in the morning twilight. Beyond the mosque a well-metalled road, sheltered by trees and skirted by green fields of cotton and sugar-cane, traversed the open country to the river—and not to the river only, but, as the finger-post indicated, to distant Peshawar on the western frontier of the Indian Empire.

It was one of those sultry mornings so suggestive to the victim of an Indian summer of the pleasures of the bath, that with the idea in my own mind I had little difficulty in accounting to myself for the number of natives of both sexes on the road between the city and the river. As I proceeded, however, the scene became unusually animated. There was a holiday look about the people I met, and, before long, I discovered that the object of attraction was not merely the refreshing water, but a group of tents which had been pitched upon the open plain to the left of the trestle bridge which spans an old channel, now known as the *Chota Ravi*.

I drew up and approached the encampment, along with a stream of natives on their way to the bathing-place or the tents. A large enclosed space on the sandy river-bank was occupied by open pavilions. In the one nearest the direction of approach there were seated, round a smouldering fire, four *yogis* very much *un*dressed, and rubbed over from head to foot with mud and ashes. One of them was beating a gong. Towards the centre of the enclosure, on a slightly raised place, sat the principal yogi. I had seen lots of yogis and other ascetics in different parts of India; but had never come across an encampment of yogis like the one before me. As for

the leader of the party, there was about his appearance neither the emaciation of person one might expect to see in a professed ascetic, nor the absent, self-concentred look one would be prepared to find in a devotee given to severe and long-continued contemplation. He was apparently between thirty-five and forty years of age, in excellent condition, and apparently in vigorous health, with the commanding presence, easy carriage, and self-possessed manner of one accustomed to the homage of men. Round about him, in picturesque disorder, were groups of men, women, and children, seated on the ground as close to his feet as possible. Three yogis repeating some Sanskrit *Mantras*,[1] probably quite unintelligible to themselves, were walking rapidly round the saint and then round the fire at which their companions were seated. A diminutive tent erected under the general canopy contained some Hindu idols—grotesque representations of the Deity—which two men were fanning in a listless sort of way.

[1] "Mantra—a hymn of invocation or form of prayer in the Sanskrit language. Mantras are used in the performance of every religious rite. They are of various sorts, invocatory, evocatory, deprecatory, conservatory. They are beneficent or hurtful, salutary or pernicious. By means of them, it is believed that great and various effects may be produced. Some are for casting out evil spirits, some inspiring love or hatred, for curing diseases or bringing them on, for causing death or averting it. Some are of a contrary nature to others, and counteract their effect: the stronger overcoming the influence of the weaker. Some are potent enough, it is said, to occasion the destruction of a whole army; while there are others which the gods themselves are constrained to obey."—Garrett's "Classical Dictionary of India."

From time to time the *principal* yogi rose to his feet with all the pride of sanctity—pride often as overbearing and offensive as any other kind of pride. His rising was the signal for the devout to make their offerings, which they did with tokens of the most humble veneration. The men were respectful enough in their manner; as for the women, they, in the effusiveness of their nature, seemed literally to worship the yogi. I saw them dip their fingers into brass *lotas* of Ravi water (for they had approached the great man after their morning ablutions), rub their moist hands over the yogi's dirty feet and legs, and then apply the offscum to their eyelids and foreheads.

In return for their offerings the visitors received, as tokens of the saint's favour, a few flowers, which they would carry away as charms and talismans to be used in the cure of the sick, or to bring good fortune to their homes.

And who can tell what real or imagined benefit the sanctified trifles may have brought to many a sick-bed in Lahore! Indeed, I was afterwards told, by one who professed to speak from personal knowledge, of a remarkable cure effected by the yogi. A boy had been ill of fever for some time. All the usual remedies had been tried without success, when the mother had the sufferer carried into the presence of the yogi. The holy man touched him, and handing his mother a few *chillies*, directed her to give the patient one every morning. She did so, and in a very short time the boy was quite restored to health. Perhaps, as currently believed, faith works wonders; perhaps the excitement of the

interview with the famous saint brought about a favourable change in the sick child's condition; or maybe the story is, after all, only one of those very doubtful ones which spring up and cluster round every religious teacher or famous ascetic.

I had taken up a convenient position just outside the enclosure when I overheard a native address another in English, evidently with the object of attracting my attention. I entered into conversation with him about the yogis, and gleaned the following particulars with regard to them. The chief man, the centre of attraction, was a native of Lahore, who had been away some twelve years engaged, according to popular belief, in deep, ecstatic contemplation and the most impossible austerities. He had now come back to his native place with all the prestige of sainthood about him. Certainly the hardships he had voluntarily endured had left no trace upon his person. And perhaps this fact was, to his admirers, only a more convincing proof of his sanctity and power. In conversing with me my informant expressed his regret at the ignorance and superstition of the common people, as if to draw the line between himself and the vulgar herd. Superstition, however, is an Old Man of the Sea not to be easily shaken off, and I am very much mistaken if a threatened curse from the yogi he affected to contemn would not have reduced my loquacious friend to a state of abject terror, for every Indian knows how direful and irrevocable are curses proceeding from the mouth of one who has obtained superhuman power by the practice of austerities.

This remarkable and peculiarly Hindu notion,

which deserves attention in connection with the subject of yogis, has been made familiar to the English reader by Southey, who, in his poem "The Curse of Kehama," has worked out the subject with much skill and force.

When the great yogi had his attention drawn to me he rose and approached the spot were I was standing, carrying in his hands a present, consisting of two mangoes and half a cocoa-nut. I accepted his gift with a *salaam*, but believing that the rules of Oriental etiquette required, in such a case, some return, however trifling, I told the saint that I had no money ("rupees") with me to make a suitable requital for his courtesy. He put on a deprecating smile, raised his hands above his head, and, in an exceeding natural and graceful attitude, gave me his benediction, observing, with reference to my remark, and in truly Oriental phrase, that "by my favour he was sufficiently rich." When I was about to withdraw another yogi came up, with garlands of flowers taken off the saint's neck, and placed them in my hand. My casual visit to the yogi has, I have little doubt, been already exaggerated into a devout pilgrimage. Probably while I write this, stories are passing from mouth to mouth regarding the *Sahib* who came deliberately to pay his respects to the yogi and made him most valuable offerings. That I could have come that way merely for a morning drive, or for the pleasure of looking at the rushing river, did not, in all probability, occur to any soul present, and so the assembled crowd must, and most naturally too, have connected my presence there with the yogi's fame, while the little romance about valuable offerings

would almost of necessity find a place in an Oriental account of my pilgrimage to the renowned ascetic.

Before I left the spot, three young yogis, with a large dog as companion, proceeded from the enclosure apparently on a begging expedition to the city. All three were well fed, in good condition, and full of animal spirits, as was evident from the brisk and boyish scamper with which they started on their pleasant and profitable errand.

On my return home the presents I had received from the yogi were begged for eagerly by my servants to whom the *syce* (groom) had related my morning's adventure. One of them gave expression to the opinion, shared no doubt by his fellows, that my good luck was boundless in having been thus favoured by the great yogi, whose fame was spread far and wide. So widely, indeed, had his fame extended, and so great had been his success, that he had, on more than one occasion, been able to feast a vast number of the city people, both *Hindus and Muhammadans*, on the open plain near his pavilion. I was told that several college students had partaken of the yogi's hospitality. Those who had done so did not relish my knowing the fact, but could not conceal from me that they secretly entertained a superstitious respect for the successful ascetic.

That the yogi had achieved a great reputation in Lahore was indisputable. Speaking of him, an educated native[1] remarked to me, that not the least

[1] By the term *educated native* is meant, throughout this book, the native who has been educated in European learning and science through the medium of the English language, this being the meaning now universally attached to the term in India.

"miraculous" act of the yogi, was feeding the multitude when he had not a rupee to call his own. "Who," he asked, "could, without supernatural power, have induced the stingy *bunneahs* and close-fisted *mahajans* to open their stores and supply him (as they certainly had done), without money and without price?" The obvious answer, from a European point of view, that superstitious dread of the yogi's power was quite sufficient to account for his success with the ignorant tradesfolk, did not find favour with my Hindu friend, who, with characteristic leaning towards the supernatural and mystical, preferred his own explanation of the yogi's influence in the Lahore bazaar.

To obviate the production of any false impression on the reader's mind by the foregoing narrative, I must state that there are hundreds of yogis in India very unlike those well-nourished and worldly-wise saints who treated me with so much courtesy on the banks of the Ravi. Indeed, there are yogis who have deliberately cut themselves off from all interest in the active pursuits of life. Seldom appearing in the busy haunts of men, these devotees practise rigid self-denial, undergo the most painful self-inflicted tortures, and spend their lives in solitary contemplation.

Every one who has seen much of India must have come across some of these ascetics, living skeletons, almost naked, and overlaid with dirt and ashes. Sometimes they are to be met with seated in the midst of five fires, four smouldering round them and the fifth—the sun—pouring its fierce rays upon their unclothed bodies, from a sky that looks like

brass. In remote out-of-the-way places the traveller may occasionally see a yogi, with an arm, attenuated and quite rigid, upraised above his matted locks, or with hands so long closed that the growing nails have penetrated the lifeless flesh. These are certainly rare, though I have come across one or two in my time. If current belief is to be trusted, the solitudes of the jungle and the lone caverns of the Himalayas are tenanted by many earnest yogis, who have retired as far as possible from the world and its distractions.

To the ordinary European, whether resident or tourist, these ascetics are incomprehensible[1] and loathsome;[2] but the Indian sees them with very different eyes, and regards them with very different feelings. To the Hindu the yogi is both a saint and a philosopher. Indeed it may not be too much to say that a comprehension of the ideas which underlie the practices of the yogis is indispensable to the student of the spiritual and religious side, which is by far the most important side, of Indian life and character. Save in their voluntary penances and self-inflicted tortures, the yogis bear no resemblance to the Christian anchorites who, in the early centuries of our era, weighed down by a sense of their own unworthiness, and awed by the expected approaching destruction of the world, fled to the

[1] "To me these men are living enigmas, and I look in vain for the sphinx who can or will give me the clue."– Baron Hubner's "Through the British Empire," vol. ii. pp. 173-174.

[2] ". . . for their reverence of such degraded, filthy, naked, and unclean beasts, as these fakers, there is simply no excuse."– "Two Years in the Jungle," by William T. Hornaday, p. 86

wilderness to mortify their flesh and humble themselves before God. Far from making any professions of humility or acknowledgment of unworthiness, the yogis put forward the most extravagant claims to knowledge and power, said to be obtained by following out a certain painful and difficult course of mental and physical discipline. "The adept acquires the knowledge of everything past and future, remote or hidden; he divines the thoughts of others, gains the strength of an elephant, the courage of a lion, and the swiftness of the wind; flies in the air, floats in the water and dives into the earth, contemplates all worlds at one glance, and performs other strange feats." [1]

Ascetic practices are common all the world over, especially amongst peoples in a low stage of civilization, "for the purpose of bringing on those abnormal mental states which are supposed to imply either possession by spirits or communion with spirits;" or with the view of producing the maniacal excitement which is mistaken for inspiration.[2] The peculiarity in the case of the yogi is that he follows out an elaborate system of ascetic exercises, essentially Indian in conception, and framed to meet the requirements of a subtle school of philosophy, which has had, and still has, a potent influence upon the speculative conceptions and practical life of the people of India.

As might have been expected, the possessors of such powers as those ascribed to the yogis are objects of dread to the ignorant, who dare not so

[1] Colebrooke's "Essays," vol. i. p. 263.

[2] Mr. Herbert Spencer's "Ecclesiastical Institutions."

much as question them about their lives or past history;[1] but invent and believe the most ridiculous stories about them. An Indian, himself a believer in the yogis, writing about certain members of this order, says they are "objects of great reverence to the ignorant hill-tribes living in the neighbourhood, who fear that the yogis may assume the forms of tigers and eat them up."[2]

Amongst Hindus trained in European modes of thought, and more or less acquainted with the results of European science, a goodly number unhesitatingly reject the pretensions of the yogis. Some, while believing that the Yoga system is true, are persuaded that, in these degenerate times, no one is able to act up to it. But, on the other hand, many Hindus of marked ability profess undoubting belief in the reality of the so-called Yog-science and in the existence of adepts or *mahatmas* at the present day. As for the ignorant millions, without knowledge of *yoga-vidya*, its objects, or its practices, they have an unfaltering faith in the power of the yogi, and venerate him accordingly, with the reverence that is born of dread. The system seems to have had its attractions for even so sceptical a mind as that of the great *Akbar*, regarding whom Professor H. H. Wilson says: "He wore his hair after their fashion, and anticipated the liberation of his soul by the fontenelle as they (the yogis) teach."[3] But it may be added that Akbar's admiration of the yoga system did not prevent his allowing a pitched battle in his presence between the rival sects of the Sannyasis

[1] "Theosophist," vol. i. pp. 90-92. [2] Ibid. p. 92.
[3] "Essays," vol. ii. p. 395.

and Yogis, which (notwithstanding their superhuman powers) ended in the complete discomfiture of the latter.[1]

Let us not, however, turn away from the yogi with contemptuous indifference on account of his preposterous pretensions, for naked, emaciated, and covered with ashes though he be, he represents, albeit in an unhealthy form, an important idea. In the grovelling world of polytheistic India, he stands forth a bold and ever-present asserter of man's inherent dignity and exalted position in the universe. Before the multitude cowering in abject terror at the altars of hideous and terrible idols, he appears as an embodiment of the belief that man, even though he be degraded and trammelled by his fleshly garment, can by his own exertions raise himself to divine heights of knowledge and power. The yogi is also highly interesting as a living exemplification of the attitude, since time immemorial, of the Indian mind towards life and nature; of the world weariness which has oppressed the East since ages before the dawn of European history, and caused her sons to fly from the struggles and pleasures of life to the quiet retreat of the jungle, and to seek in a living death an escape from the disquieting, and to them unbearable, activity of thought itself.

It was probably during the Macedonian invasion that the European world made its first direct and personal acquaintance with the Indian anchorites, when one of them, the naked Dandamis, reclining on his bed of leaves, treated with scornful indiffer-

[1] Sir H. Elliot's "Muhammadan Historians of India," by Dowson, vol. v. p. 318.

ence the haughty messengers of Alexander, bidding them go tell their master: "Dandamis has no need of aught that is yours, and therefore will not go to you, but if you want anything from Dandamis come you to him."[1] That event occurred more than two housand years ago. But for centuries prior to the Macedonian invasion India had been *par excellence* he land of anchorites, and during the long interval, rom the days of Alexander to the present time, has roduced an abundant crop of hermits, misanthropes, nd mystics. Some of the grandest figures in Indian ic poetry are the anchorites, who, according to the sts, were in their day a terror to the gods themes.

Writing in the middle of the ninth century of our the Mussulman historian Abu Zaid said:

n India there are persons who, in accordance with their ssion, wander in the woods and mountains, and rarely municate with the rest of mankind. Sometimes they have ing to eat but herbs and the fruits of the forest. . . . Some hem go about naked. Others stand naked with the face rned to the sun, having nothing on but a panther's skin. In y travels I saw a man in the position I have described; sixteen years afterwards I returned to that country and found him in the same posture. What astonished me was that he was not melted by the heat of the sun."[2]

Succeeding historians down to our own time have referred to or described the Indian ascetics, for they have ever been a noteworthy feature in the Indian

[1] J. W. McCrindle's "Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian," p. 126.

[2] Sir H. Elliot's "History of India as told by its own Historians," vol. i. p. 6.

world. Here is a modern picture which I present to the reader as of interest from more than one point of view:

"Wolff went also with Mr. Wilson to see one of the celebrated Yoghees, who was lying in the sun in the street, the nails of whose hands were grown into his cheek, and a bird's nest upon his head. Wolff asked him, 'How can one obtain the knowledge of God?' He replied, 'Do not ask me questions; you may look at me, for I am God.' Wolff indignantly said to him, 'You will go to hell if you speak in such a way.'"[1]

All, however, who practise austerities are not necessarily yogis; nor need they be actuated by the yogi's desire to attain utter unconsciousness of his individual existence by identification with the Universal Spirit.

Here and there, all over India, may be seen men who practise, or pretend that they have practised, austerities for their purification from guilt and the ultimate attainment of beatitude. And there are, no doubt, in the ranks of the ascetics many disappointed men for whom the battle of life has been too hot, and who have taken refuge in flight; the spirit of renunciation which lies at the root of true aceticism being only too much in harmony with the passive, desponding temper of the Indian mind.

The yogis, however, must not be confounded with other ascetics. They form a distinct order, hold peculiar doctrines, and go through, or pretend to go through, a prescribed course of discipline for the attainment of certain objects which they have in view.

The *yoga-vidya* is one of the six recognized orthodox systems of Hindu philosophy, and the text-book

[1] Dr. George Smith's "Life of Dr. Wilson," p. 74.

of the yogis is an old Sanskrit work, the "yoga-Satra" of Patan-jali,[1] which teaches that by contemplation, posturing, the suspension of the breath, and other practices, the ascetic can disengage his soul from its gross earthly connections and then be able to attain a full knowledge of the past and of the future, of the condition of this and of other worlds, and of the very thoughts of his fellow-men. Not only far-reaching knowledge, but power over man and nature of the most extraordinary and unlimited kind, is promised to the successful yogi.

It is certainly not, at the present day, easy for the Western mind to enter into the spirit of the so-called yoga philosophy; but the student of religious opinions is aware that in the early centuries of our era the Gnostics, Manichæans, and Neoplatonists, derived their peculiar tenets and practices from the *yoga-vidya* of India, and that, at a later date, the *Sufi* philosophy of Persia drew its most remarkable ideas from the same source.[2]

[1] This work has been translated into English by Dr. Rajendra Lala Mitra.

[2] Professor Weber's "Indian Literature" (English translation), page 239.

"The principal points of contact, however, between Indian philosophy and Gnosticism may be regarded as common to both branches of the former. These are (1) the doctrine of the emanation of the world from the one absolute existence and of its final reabsorption into that existence; (2) the doctrine of the inherent evil, and at the same time of the unreality of matter; (3) the doctrine of the antagonism between spirit and matter, and the practical consequence, that the highest aim of religion is to free the soul from the contamination of matter and to raise it to a final absorption in the being of the absolute."—"Gnostic Heresies of the First and Second Centuries," by Dean Mansel, pp. 29, 30.

The great historian of the Roman Empire refers to the subject in the following passage:

"The fakirs of India and the monks of the Oriental Church, were alike persuaded, that in total abstraction of the faculties of the mind and body, the purer spirit may ascend to the enjoyment and vision of the Deity. The opinion and practice of the monasteries of Mount Athos will be best represented in the words of an abbot, who flourished in the eleventh century. 'When thou art alone in thy cell,' says the ascetic teacher, 'shut thy door, and seat thyself in a corner; raise thy mind above all things vain and transitory; recline thy beard and chin on thy breast; turn thy eyes and thy thoughts towards the middle of thy belly, the region of the navel; and search the place of the heart, the seat of the soul. At first, all will be dark and comfortless; but if you persevere day and night, you will feel an ineffable joy; and no sooner has the soul discovered the place of the heart, than it is involved in a mystic and ethereal light.' This light, the production of a distempered fancy, the creature of an empty stomach and an empty brain, was adored by the Quietists as the pure and perfect essence of God himself."[1]

A system like that of the yogis, which has lasted so many centuries, which is still believed in, and which influenced the ideas and practices of ascetics in far distant lands, can hardly be undeserving of attention.

Without entering into unnecessary details—many of them are simply disgusting—I shall quote, as samples, a few of the rules of practice required to be followed by the would-be yogi in order to induce a state of *samadhi*—hypnotism or trance—which is the condition or state in which the yogi is to enjoy the promised privileges of yoga. The extracts are

[1] Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," chap. lxiii.

from a treatise on the yoga philosophy by Assistant-Surgeon Nobin Chander Paul.[1]

"Place the left foot upon the right thigh and the right foot upon the left thigh; hold with the right hand the right great toe and with the left hand the left great toe (the hands coming from behind the back and crossing each other); rest the chin on the interclavicular space and fix the sight on the tip of the nose.

* * * * * *

"Inspire through the left nostril, fill the stomach with the inspired air by the act of deglutition, suspend the breath, and then expire through the right nostril. Next inspire through the right nostril, swallow the inspired air, suspend the breath, and finally expire through the left nostril.

* * * * * *

"Be seated in a tranquil posture, and fix your sight on the tip of the nose for the space of ten minutes.

"Close the ears with the middle fingers, incline the head a little to the right side and listen with each ear attentively to the sound produced by the other ear, for the space of ten minutes.

"Pronounce inaudibly twelve thousand times the mystic syllable *Om*, and meditate upon it daily after deep inspirations.

"After a few forcible inspirations swallow the tongue, and thereby suspend the breath, and deglutate the saliva for two hours.

"Listen to the sounds within the right ear abstractedly for two hours, with the left ear.

* * * * * *

"Repeat the mystic syllable *Om* 20,736,000 times in silence and meditate upon it.

"Suspend the respiratory movements for the period of twelve days, and you will be in a state of Samadhi."

Such are a few of the rules of discipline prescribed by the *Hatha yog* system; and although the reader

[1] Republished in "The Theosophist."

may not, perhaps, feel surprised at the yogi's attaining *samadhi*, or anything else, after successfully performing feats of which the above are only samples, it can hardly fail to strike him, if he be at all acquainted with what has been improperly called the science of "animal magnetism," that the rules in question, however extravagant they may be, have, some of them at least, been framed with a practical knowledge, if not an intelligent appreciation, of the means by which self-hypnotization may be produced. I refer more especially to the rules requiring the yogi to fix his eyes on a near point, as the tip of his nose, and to concentrate his attention for a prolonged period upon a particular sound, as that supposed to be produced in the right or left ear.[1]

Leaving out of consideration the crowning feat of yogaism—complete absorption into or identification with the Universal Spirit—an impartial account of the system and its results requires that mention should be made of some strange achievements of the yogis, for which at least there is ample testimony—whatever that testimony may be worth. Only a generation ago, if we are to credit the statements of several eye-witnesses, the yogi Haridas, after voluntarily falling into an hypnotic condition in the presence of Maha-

[1] On this subject a recent writer says: "On retrouve en Orient, et en particulier dans l'Inde, des états analogues à l'état hypnotique; pour les provoquer, les uns, comme les fakirs, regardent fixement le ciel, un objet lumineux on le bout de leur nez; les autres, comme les moines du Mont Athos, contemplent leur nombril, d'où le nom d'Omphalopsyches qui leur a été donné" ("Le Magnetisme Animal, étude critique et experimentale sur l'hypnotisme," par le Dr. Fernand Bottey. Paris, 1884).

rajah Runjeet Singh, of the Punjab, and his court, was carefully buried in a garden outside the city of Lahore. For forty days strict watch was kept over the grave, and, at the expiration of that time, the yogi was exhumed, cold, stiff, and unconscious; but was gradually restored to animation by applying warmth to the head and friction to the body, while forcing air gently into the lungs. Granting the truth of the story, and the absence of any collusion or trickery, the only legitimate inference from the facts is, of course, that Haridas, in the practice of *yoga-vidya*, or otherwise, had acquired the art of suspending animation for a considerable period; an art not without interest from a physiological point of view, but one the acquisition of which, Europeans are never likely to care for. As regards Haridas himself, it is said that he was a man of loose morals, against whom several complaints were made to Runjeet Singh; that he eloped with a Katrany woman, made his way to the hills, died there, and was duly buried according ot the custom of the country.[1]

Referring to the case of Haridas, the writer, (W. F. K.) of the article "Hybernation" in the new edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* says:

"Long continued suspension of consciousness in man, whether voluntary or otherwise, is rare in temperate climates, but it is more frequent in India, where some religious ascetics are stated, on unimpeachable authority, to possess the power of throwing themselves into a state closely resembling hybernation for an indefinite period. Many curious cases have been

[1] See "Thirty-five Years in the East," by Dr. Honigberger, Physician to the Court of Lahore, pp. 126, 130. London, 1852.

recorded by Mr. Braid in his small treatise on 'Human Hybernation' published in 1850, the most celebrated of which is that of a fakir who was actually buried alive at Lahore in 1837 in the presence of Runjeet Singh and Sir Claude Wade, and who was dug up and restored to consciousness several months[1] afterwards, after every precaution had been taken to prevent any from disturbing the grave in the interval."

Besides the *Hatha yog* system, which I have briefly described above, there is another one, the *Raj yog*, according to which *samadhi* may be attained without severe bodily discipline, by the mere force of self-control and meditation, possibly combined with fixation of attention on some object (*e.g.* the nose) near enough to cause squinting. Whether this system owes its origin to the extreme difficulty, not to say impracticability, of acting up to the rules of the Hatha yog system, or whether, as I have been assured, it is older than that system, I do not pretend to say. But I should state here that some who claim to be authorities on the subject maintain that one could not attain *samadhi* through the Raj yog alone, unless, indeed, one had gone through the terrible discipline of the Hatha yog in a previous existence.[2]

The *Raj yog* philosophy, as expounded in English by the Madras yogi Sabhapaty Swami, with whom I had the pleasure of conversing on one occasion, teaches that man's existence, as distinct and separate from the Infinite Universal Spirit, is a mere delusion, which arises from the genesis of the so-called twelve faculties, due to the circulation of the Universal

[1] Dr. Honigberger, who was at Runjeet Singh's court at the time, says *forty days*.—J. C. O.

[2] Swami Dyanand Saraswati in "Theosophist," vol. ii. p. 47.

Spirit through the human body, in a triple set of hollow vessels, answering in some way to animal functions, mind, and soul—reminding one of Lytton's impressive description of the red, the azure, and the silvery light circulating through Margrave's prostrate frame in the museum under the power of Sir Philip Derval's spells. The position and course of these vessels is indicated in a fantastic diagram in the Madras yogi's pamphlet. In its passage through them the Infinite Spirit evolves, at different points, the several faculties, senses, and desires of men; but these, being entirely gross and delusive, must be subdued and annihilated, if the soul in man is to gain its lost omniscience and serenity. For the attainment of this object the Madras yogi—himself a professed adept who had been privileged to fly through the air to Kailas, the celestial mountain, and there to behold the Great God Siva employed in yoga practices—lays down detailed rules, having for their aim and object a gradual extinction of all the human faculties, senses, and desires, by means of arguments addressed to them separately; by a course of long continued meditation with closed eyes in a secluded place; by drawing the spirit up and down through the triple channel of the *sikmana* (or Sashumna) *nadee*, and by the uttering of certain spells or mantras.

Addressing the neophyte, the Madras yogi observes:

"Remember . . . that you must be very cautious that the twelve faculties dead and buried should not give forth the bad effluvia of their putrification and annoy and disturb you at the time of your *samadhi*. I again warn you and say beware of those

treacherous faculties, and become not again their servile, crouching, mean and ignoble slave and victim.

"If in this state you have any consciousness of seeing the Infinite Spirit, cancel that consciousness also. For who is it that sees, and what is that that is seen? In fact empty yourself from the consciousness of wisdom and duality; *you must become the Infinite Spirit without* the idea of becoming the Infinite Spirit."

Thus by the practice of Raj yog and the attainment of samadhi the devotee becomes unconcious of his existence as a man, and passes, as it were into the full consciousness of divinity with all its attributes. But what becomes of the body? On this point the Madras yogi says that the rishis and yogis, after remaining, as long as they like, in the condition of absorption in the Infinite, metamorphose their bodies into lingams,[1] many of which may be seen in the *ashrums*, and then enter into final reunion with the Universal Spirit. The Madras yogi goes on to say that many ancient *rishis*, stated to have died thousands of years ago, are still living, and are visited periodically by the yogis on the Neilgherry Hills.[2] So congenial are marvels to the genius of the East, that possibly when Mr. Ryder Haggard's powerful story, "She," finds its way into the hands of Indian believers in *yoga-vidya*, they will pretend that the yogis had long since discovered the wonderful fire which is the Spirit of the World, the very life of Nature, and, bathing in its life-

[1] The phallic emblem worshipped by the followers of the god Siva.

[2] A treatise on "Vedantic Raj Yoga Philosophy" by the Mahatma Giana Guroo Yogi Sabhapaty Swami. Edited by Siris Chandra Basu. Lahore, 1880.

giving flames, had secured themselves against physical decay and death.

In one form or other the idea which underlies the doctrine of yoga has a profound and abiding influence on the religious life of the entire Hindu race, and a fascination even for minds which have emancipated themselves, to a large degree, from hereditary and traditional influences. Yoga in its spiritual aspect, and in an Occidental disguise, is well presented by the late Babu Keshub Chunder Sen, "the Apostle of the New Dispensation" and leader of the Brahmo sect, in the following interesting passage:

"What does yoga literally mean? Union. The English word which makes the nearest approach to it is Communion. The created soul, in its worldly and sinful condition, lives separate and estranged from the Supreme Soul. A reconciliation is needed; nay, more than mere reconciliation. A harmonious union is sought and realized. This union with Deity is the real secret of Hindu yoga. It is a spiritual unification, it is consciousness of two in one; duality in unity. To the philosophical and thoughtful Hindu this is the highest heaven. He pants for no other salvation; he seeks no other *mukti* or deliverance. Separation, disunion, estrangement, a sense of distinction, duality, the pride of the eye, this is to him the root of all sin and suffering; and the only heaven he aspires to is conscious union and oneness with Deity. He is ever struggling and striving to attain this blessed condition of divine humanity. Once in possession of it, he is above all sorrow and distraction, sin and impurity, and he feels all is serene and tranquil within. All his devotions and prayers, his rites and ceremonies, his meditations and his self-denials, are but means and methods which help him on to this heaven."[1]

[1] "Yoga: Objective and Subjective." Calcutta: The Brahmo Tract Society, 1884.

It will be evident, after what has already been stated in this paper, that this yogaism of the *Brahmo* is not quite that of the orthodox *Hindu*, but, like Dr. Jenkinson's Christianity in Mr. Mallock's "New Republic," is "really a new firm trading under an old name and trying to purchase the goodwill of the former establishment."

During the last few years the *yoga-vidya* system has attracted an unusual amount of attention amongst the educated classes in India, owing to the fact that a Yankee colonel and a clever Russian lady went about the country openly professing their belief in the existence of yogi adepts and their extraordinary powers. The gallant colonel told a large audience of natives, in the most emphatic manner, that there were at the present time Indian adepts in Yog-Vidya who could carry on conversation with one another, at any distance, without the cumbrous appliances ("poles, wires, and pots of chemicals") of the European electric telegraph; omitting, however, to add that the wonderful occult telegraph system of the yogi—independent of poles, wires, and pots of chemicals—has not been of much use to the people of India and that the vast knowledge of the secrets of nature possessed by these sages, has not helped their compatriots to make life one whit more pleasant or endurable. As for the Russian lady, she took higher ground: for, although not an adept herself, she enjoyed the privilege of the friendship and countenance of one of the great yogis or *mahatmas* of the Himalayas, Koot Hoomi Lal Singh, whose mighty aid enabled her, it seems, to accomplish a few feats such as

ordinary conjurors perform every day without the help of such highly endowed patrons.

Certain classes of the natives of India naturally hailed, with joy and pride, the advent of these new allies from the advanced and civilized countries beyond the sea; allies who were never tired of flattering their national vanity; by telling them that their own yogi adepts, dwelling in remote parts of the Himalayas, had satisfactorily solved problems towards which European science was only just feebly groping its way. That many Hindus should, under the circumstances, become ardent followers of these new apostles from the West, was only natural. But it has to be added that the clever lady and her colleague actually found believers and followers amongst the highest and best educated class of Europeans in India. Possibly a strong tincture of the prevailing scepticism with regard to all ancient beliefs, combined with a leaning towards the new Comtean religion of humanity, may have led these gentlemen to give a favourable reception to the idea of the existence of human-gods in the inaccessible mountains. But whether this surmise be correct or not, it is certain that several Europeans of good social position joined the Theosophical Society, and became humble disciples of Madame Blavatsky and the invisible but potent Koot Hoomi Lal Singh. One convert to the new religion wrote a very readable book on the occult world, in which he unfalteringly believed. Others gave what countenance and support they could to the new movement. A shrine of Koot Hoomi, with a lock and key, was set up, and many remarkable, if meaningless, phenomena

took place there; for instance, fragments of a broken saucer were introduced into the shrine and the door locked. On opening it, a whole saucer was found inside. We are of course to believe that the whole saucer was made in some wonderful way by the presiding divinity out of the broken pieces put into the cabinet—though the sceptical have been wicked enough to suggest the existence of sliding backs and such-like things.

In April 1883, I had the pleasure of listening to, and exchanging a few words with, one who professed to be an advanced *Chela*, or disciple, of the mahatmas of the Himalayas and Thibet, that dark borderland of mystery to the Indians of our days, as it was to their forefathers; who believed that on Mount Meru lived the Uttara Kurus, who reached the age of ten thousand years on the banks of streams flowing in golden beds. His advent was thus publicly announced:

"An advanced Chela (on his way from the North) has condescended to attend the meeting, and to show certain test phenomena, in order to convince the people as to the reality of occult forces, and will also narrate his personal experiences in *yoga-vidya* as well as give an account of the Mahatmas of the Theosophical Society."

The chela was a very spare, diminutive, dark-skinned man, evidently a Dravidian from southern India, although, for obvious reasons, he declined to reveal his nationality. His dress was peculiar. On his head he wore a small skull-cap of orange-yellow cloth with a dark border, below which his long hair could be seen. A loose-sleeved robe of a brown

material reached nearly to his ankles. Over it was a sleeveless vest of a gay pattern. Dark coloured trowsers and well-fitting English boots of untanned leather, laced up the front, completed this strange costume.

As for the "Mahatmas of the Theosophical Society," they are adepts in *yoga-vidya*, like the mythical Koot Hoomi Lal Singh, "whose comprehension of Nature and Humanity ranges," according to Mr. A. P. Sinnett, "so far beyond the science and philosophy of Europe, that only the broadest-minded representatives of either will be able to realize the existence of such powers in Man as those he constantly exercises."[1] These are the words of a European, but we shall better understand what the people of India think about such matters by letting the chela enlighten us on the subject.

Addressing his audience in English, he said that when quite a little child, only seven or eight years of age, a yogi appeared before him unexpectedly. A radiance streamed from the person of the holy man, and so surprised and awed him that he fell down and worshipped his visitor, regarding him as a god, "for," added the chela, naïvely, "in those days I believed in a God, in fact in many gods." The yogi taught the child some signs, which he learned, later on, were *masonic* signs, and then vanished. After this visit the child became thoughtful, gave up the companionship of his young playmates, refused food, and did nothing but long for the reappearance of the wonderful yogi. His

[1] "The Occult World," by A. P. Sinnett; Dedication. Trübner and Co., 1881.

parents thought that he had gone mad, and were sore distressed on his account. At length he became possessed—I forget how—of a talisman, by means of which he could constrain the yogi to appear before him. He exercised his power, and the yogi, who was really a mahatma of exalted wisdom and sanctity, came and carried him off, apparently without the knowledge and consent of his parents. He subjected the boy to a very severe course of discipline. For instance, if the chela had to proceed to a village one mile away, his master would order him to go there by a circuitous route of seven miles. If he lay down to rest in any spot, the yogi would, in a most arbritrary way, order him to rise and lie down somewhere else, and all this simply to test his pupil's capacity for implicit obedience. The yogi eventually, however, rewarded the chela's devotion by instructing him in occult science. He then wandered through many countries, Assam, Bengal, the Himalayas, and Tibet, living in the forests in great physical discomfort, often obliged to climb up a tree and tie himself at night to its branches for security against wild beasts. Once in traversing a pathless jungle he found himself suddenly upon the verge of a stupendous precipice. He hesitated to retrace his steps, because he was superstitious and thought that such a course would be inauspicious, so he prayed earnestly to his *guru* who suddenly made his appearance, and bade him follow him. He did so. Before him no pathway was visible, and, as he proceeded, there was none behind, but *between* himself and his guide there was a distinct and well-marked pathway. "Let science explain this if it can!" said the chela,

triumphantly. In this strain was he proceeding, when voices in the audience (all present except myself were natives) suggested that as darkness was closing in upon us, the exhibition of the promised test phenomena should not be delayed. Well, they were at last arrived at, and proved to be simple enough. To establish the truth of *yoga-vidya* and the reality of the hidden forces in which the so-called *occultists* profess belief, the "advanced chela" offered to allow one of his fingers to be cut; asserting that no blood would flow from it, and that if that member were amputated entirely, it would be miraculously restored. I examined the particular finger which was thus ready to bear the heavy burden of occultism. It was a thin, fleshless, skinny finger, but resembled in these respects, its fellows on the same hand. A ring encircled this finger. An educated and highly respectable native gentleman of good position examined the ring critically, remarking to me that he knew a certain talisman, and wished to see if this was the same, apparently prepared to find the finger fully protected from the knife by the virtue of the charmed circlet. In reply to an inquiry, the chela said he would not object to another finger being experimented upon, provided the ring were transferred to it, thus admitting or declaring the potency of the ring.

Mr. Sinnett, already quoted, writes as follows:

"Ask any cultivated Hindoo if he has ever heard of Mahatmas and *yoga-vidya*, or occult science, and it is a hundred to one that you will find he has—and, unless he happens to be one of the hybrid products of Anglo-Indian Universities, that he fully believes in the reality of the powers ascribed to yoga."

This statement I am prepared to endorse. And on the occasion I refer to, there were present many "cultivated Hindoos" of the type approved of by Mr. Sinnett, and also several of the "hybrid products of Anglo-Indian Universities," whose scepticism regarding the truth of *yoga vidya* was apparent in their eagerness to put the chela's pretensions to the test.

In response to the chela's challenge, one young man came forward to cut the finger. Several applauded him; others cried shame! The president vetoed the proceeding, saying, that the amputation or cutting of the finger would be regarded by the law as a case of causing grevious hurt, duly punishable under the penal code. The maintenance of order was now impossible. Everybody pressed forward to see what was going on. An animated dispute was being carried on round the chela. Two of the three kerosine lamps on the table had been extinguished, whether by accident or otherwise I could not tell. The affair had become, literally, a *screaming farce*, and I thought it time to withdraw.

But the matter did not end here. The chela and his supporters were followed to their lodgings. The fulfilment of the proposed test was pressed home, with the result that a young student in the Government College sliced off a portion of the flesh from the end of the chela's finger, followed of course by a copious flow of blood. The facts of the case were stated to me by the man who performed the operation; and the incident may be taken as a fair sample of the uncompromising struggle just commencing in India, with more than ordinary warmth, between the

deeply rooted time-honoured superstitions of the East and the modern ideas imported from the West.

In a recent work Professor Max Müller says that the yogi hermits living in the forests of the Himalaya would be the last to claim any mysterious knowledge beyond what the sastras supply.[1] I do not know what authority the learned Professor may have for this statement; but as far as my experience goes, yogaism in the eyes even of men who have had the privilege of instruction in Western science is, without doubt, a system of strange, extraordinary, and mysterious knowledge, giving its possessor very extensive power over men and natural phenomena. Only three or four years ago a graduate of an Indian University thought it worth while to publish a treatise on *yoga-vidya*, embodying such puerilities as the following:—

"In a lonely place let a student of yoga stand with his back towards the sun or moon. Let him fix his eyes on the throat of the shadow he throws and repeat the mantra, *Om K'ram parâ brahmane mansah* for one hundred and eight times, standing in the same position. Let him see into the sky. In this practice let him persevere for six months. He shall see the great light, and obtain powers over those who walk on earth. The subject is a very extensive one. There are many other advantages in this practice. If it is carried on for two years, past as well as future becomes present to the man."[2]

The passage just cited refers, I believe, to the fact that if you stare intently for some time at your own shadow cast by the bright sunshine and then look up at the sky, you will see your image reproduced there.

[1] "Biographical Essays," p. 177.

[2] "The Science of Breath," by Pandit Rama Prasad Kasyapa, B.A.

This after-image Indian mystics call the *astral body*, and they declare that it is possible to establish familiar intercourse with it, to induce it to converse freely and to get it to render assistance in the affairs of life. Thus upon a fact well known to scientific men, and easily explainable, the exuberant Oriental imagination has built up an airy fabric of mystery and delusion.

The ethical system of the yogi is simple enough. He has apparently no duties to perform in regard to his fellow-men, though he is required to abstain from slaughter, falsehood, theft, incontinence and avarice.[1] His object in life is to withdraw, as far as possible, from human society, from its business, its troubles, its aspirations, and, in silent solitude, to deliberately annihilate every faculty and attribute of his manhood. The world of humanity may go its way while the yogi is lost in the Universal Spirit. With a strange want of appreciation of the legitimate powers and functions of the healthy human mind, without even a glimmering of the beauty and interest of the infinitely varied phenomena which science has brought within its ken, the yogi shuts his eyes to the sensible world around him, and expects universal knowledge from idle self-contemplation.

The root idea of the yoga philosophy and practice must be looked for in that pantheism which has ever been the esoteric creed of Brahmanic India and of Asia generally. Since man is really and essentially a part of the Universal Deity (the all-God), consisting of both spiritual and material elements, it is surely possible, argued the Brahman, for the in-

[1] "Hindu Philosophy," by Ram Chandra Bose, M.A., p. 175.

telligent part of him to attain to a consciousness of its oneness with Deity, or rather the Universal Spirit, and in doing so to become possessed of all the attributes of godhood. The real difficulty in the way was the body, with its senses, its appetites, and its passions. If these could be subdued the desired object would be secured.[1] In a state of trance the bodily functions become suspended, and hence it seemed to the Brahman that the attainment of this condition should be the aim of any one who desired to be reunited with the Universal Spirit. And as already remarked, the practices enjoined by the rules of the *yoga-vidya* would seem to be such as the experience of the Hindus had found to be most conducive to the production of a state of hypnotism. Thus far we can follow the yogi. Beyond this comes dreamland, mental hallucination and deliberate imposture.

Although there are, and must at all times have been, honest yogis, yet the calling has, undoubtedly, its attractions for impostors. The disappointed man, disgusted with life, and willing to renounce it, turns for consolation to a system which promises complete release from the illusions of human hopes and the penalties of human infirmities. The ambitious enthusiast enters upon its practices to acquire the power he expects to attain by the proper observance of the prescribed conditions; whereas the knave, on his part, takes up the calling without any serious intention of abiding by the rules, but with the very

[1] The reader of Plato will not need to be reminded how Socrates taught that the body, with its eyes and ears and other organs of sense, was only a hindrance to the soul in the acquisition of the knowledge of existence ("Phædo").

sufficient object of imposing upon the credulous multitude, under the influence of the vague, indefinable terror inspired by the superhuman power he arrogantly lays claim to, and which the vulgar are only too ready to attribute to him.

Of the fact that some men who practise yog at the present day do honestly believe they acquire extraordinary power thereby, we had a curious instance at Lahore. A yogi, who believed himself possessed of a commanding influence over wild animals, in order to put his powers to the test, attempted some familiarities with the tiger in the Lahore Zoological Gardens, and got himself so mauled that his arm had to be amputated.

Cases of deliberate imposture are numerous, and sometimes come before our law courts.

Some years ago the following story went the round of the Anglo-Indian newspapers:—A yogi predicted that on a certain important occasion an idol would emerge from the ground at Bithooria in Jodhpore. In due time an idol rose gradually above the surface of the earth, and immediately became an object of worship to tens of thousands, who flocked to lay their offerings before the god who had thus miraculously made his appearance in the world. The place was taken under the Maharajah's protection, and yielded a considerable revenue, though probably only for a brief period, as the idol retreated into the earth, as slowly and mysteriously as it had come forth. The explanation of the mystery was that the prophet had dug a deep but narrow pit, and filled it, almost to the brim, with *gram*. On this foundation he placed the idol and covered it up. He then

allowed a sufficient supply of water to reach the gram, which in swelling in the narrow pit raised the idol above the ground. When, subsequently, the gram was allowed to dry or rot the idol subsided with it, and was lost to the anxious gaze of its worshippers.

A philosophy of quietism is natural to the indolence and enervation of an Indian life. While European writers are never tired of insisting that *action* is the object of man's existence, or as Carlyle put it—"the end of Man is an Action and not a Thought, though it were the noblest"—the Hindu philosopher deprecates action, believing rather in quiet contemplation. Hence yogaism flourishes and has flourished for ages in India, and the question naturally presents itself: What has been the practical outcome of the system? The question may not be easy to answer, but this much at least may be said without hesitation, that the best minds have been withdrawn, through yogaism, from the pursuit of practical objects, and drowned in a dull lethargic sleep, unprofitable alike to themselves and their country; while upon the masses, unacquainted with the subtle doctrines of pantheism and so-called yoga philosophy, the effect of having before them the lazy, dirty, repulsive yogi as an ideal of excellence and a pattern for imitation, cannot have been otherwise than injurious. How long the unwashed, unkempt ascetic, who, disregarding every duty and obligation to family or society, sits absorbed in the contemplation of the tip of his own nose, or wanders about the country living upon the credulity and fears of the ignorant, shall remain an object of veneration to the people, must depend upon the many and

various influences now at work in modifying the ideas and character of the natives of India. Of course it is the heroic, and not the obviously repulsive, side of asceticism which, in the case of the yogi or any other anchorite, commands, in the first instance, the admiration of the people. The ascetic's self-denial, his contempt of the world and worldly pleasures, his self-inflicted penances and mortifications, are indications of will-force, determination, tenacity of purpose and self-sufficiency, which attract and overawe the multitude. The ascetic, by his scornful renunciation of all they hold most valuable, asserts his superiority to and commands the homage of the vulgar, which in the case of the yogi is enhanced by dread of his supposed power. After making allowances, however, for whatever of good there may be in yogaism and in the yogis themselves, it will be admitted, at any rate by Europeans, that until these useless, selfish, and uncouth idols are dethroned, the Indian mind will not rise to a just appreciation of real (as distinguished from ceremonial) cleanliness, manly energy, and public spirit.

Happily there are already signs which indicate that even such educated natives as cannot emancipate themselves from a belief in *yoga-vidya*—national beliefs die hard—are beginning to be ashamed of the dirty, indolent, and repulsive mendicants who perambulate the country, and, for the credit of the so-called yog science, pretend that the *real* yogis are very different from these unclean and disgusting objects of popular veneration.

With the spread of Western ideas, and with the growth of new objects of ambition created by inti-

mate contact with the restless civilization and free institutions of Europe, the yogi and his system will necessarily occupy a diminishing place in the thoughts and in the hearts of the people of India; but so thoroughly suited is *yoga-vidya* to the genius of the East, that probably many generations will pass away before it is numbered with the extinct systems of a vanished state of society.

II.

EXPERIENCES WITH FORTUNE TELLERS.

"You cannot doubt the seer's prophetic sight;
Trust me, what he hath said will surely be.
Whatever is uttered by the holy Brahman,
Who is the light divine and manifest,
Must come to past."

Uttara-Rama-Charitra (Professor H. H. WILSON'S Translation).

A WELL-DRESSED man, with a big wallet under his arm and a pamphlet in his hand, presented himself before me as I sat in my verandah, announcing his presence in these words, "*Fartune tailer sar!*" which I believe represented his entire stock of what was meant for English. He was of middle stature, of that clean yellow-brown complexion (which has been compared to the colour of a new saddle) common amongst natives of the better sort in India. His features were well-cut, his eyes sharp and intelligent. A white line was neatly painted down the length of his nose, and two other white lines ran along the outer margins of his ears. He wore gold earrings set with pearls, and from his neck hung two strings

of beads, the shorter one consisting of alternate pieces of gold and red coral, the longer one of neatly shaped bits of sweet-scented sandal-wood. There was nothing of the gipsy about this man. Quite the reverse; he looked a person in easy circumstances, enjoying comfortable relations with his neighbours and the world in general.

I asked to see the pamphlet he carried. He handed it to me very readily. It was an astrological almanac for the year, and, after a little chaffering, he sold it to me for six annas, which I afterwards learned was just six times its market value. After buying the pamphlet I told the fortune-teller to go away, but he was by far too experienced in his trade to be got rid of so easily, and immediately had recourse to the old trick so familiar to professors of his art. Without examining my hand he could tell, from the indications given by my face alone, that the fate in store for me was a very good one; but he protested that the pleasant details of the future could only be read in the lines of the open palm. "Just show me your hand," he said, "and I will reveal to you all the secrets of the future. Yours is a good fate." I still refused. He next tried flattery. Looking straight into my eyes, as if to read me through and through, he affirmed, with much impressiveness, that I was a man of strict probity and one who never broke his word; and this, for reasons which became apparent in the sequel, he reiterated several times. In regard to my past life he hazarded some vague guesses, which in a few cases were fairly correct and in others very wide of the truth. Having prolonged these preliminaries sufficiently for

my purpose, which was to draw the fortune-teller out, I resigned my palm to him. After scanning it attentively, he began predicting with much volubility the length of the years, eighty-four, allotted to me; the number of children, thirteen, I was to be father to, and so on. Suddenly he paused in the midst of his vaticinations, as if in some perplexity, and then announced, with every mark of deep and natural concern, that an enemy was endeavouring to cause serious injury to me and mine. "The enemy," he said, speaking slowly and thoughtfully, with a far-off look in his eyes, as if peering into the mystery, "was probably a disappointed servant;" but when pressed on this point, the astrologer admitted that he could not make any positive assertion on the subject. But whoever he might be, the enemy in question had, after the manner of the practisers of the black art in all countries, made tiny images (*putlas*) to represent me and the members of my family, and, invoking a terrible curse upon these *simulacra*, had consumed them with fire.[1] With an appearance of earnestness which would certainly have had considerable effect upon any credulous

[1] "There are districts in Great Britain and America, and many more on the continent of Europe, where spells that waste and destroy are still believed in; where effigies of wax and even onions are labelled with some hated name, and stuck over with pins, and set near fires to be melted or dried up, in full belief that some subject of the charm will be consumed by disease along with the object used."—Conway's "Demonology," vol. i. p. 272.

The same custom was known to Plato and is practised by negroes (Lang's "Myth, Ritual, and Religion," i. 98). As every reader of modern English poetry knows, the superstition

person, the Brahman revealed to me that the danger hanging over me and mine was death to at least three members of my household, and a long and dangerous illness in my own case. He very prudently did not threaten me with an untimely end, having already announced that I was to live to the advanced age of eighty-four years. Although I tried to betray no signs of incredulity, the Brahman seemed to think that my faith in his knowledge or veracity needed strengthening. "Doubt me not," he said, with uplifted hands and eyes turned heavenwards; "I am a Brahman, and God will strike me blind if I am telling you any untruth. May my strength forsake me, may my very life be the sacrifice, if what I am asserting be false." "Sit down here," he added, "and I will make this matter clear to you. I will put it beyond all doubt." He asked for a flower and a basin of water. A rose and a bowl of water were brought. The Brahman made me wash my hands and arms carefully to a little above the wrists, and repeating strange incantations (Sanskrit, *mantras*), he made me close my right hand over the rose and dip both hands, tightly closed, into the vessel of water. I had no idea of what was going

in question is woven into Dante Gabriel Rossetti's impressive little poem "Sister Helen," the first stanza of which is:

"Why did you melt your waxen man,
Sister Helen?
To-day is the third since you began!
The time was long, yet the time ran,
Little brother.
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Three days to-day, between Hell and Heaven!)"

to follow, but willing to see and learn, I passively obeyed all the directions of the fortune-teller. After awhile he ceased his muttered spells, requested me to take my hands out of the water, and turning up the right sleeve of my coat, showed me—to my surprise, I must confess—a dark mark upon my bare skin just above the wrist, resembling a rudely designed figure with a round head, an oval trunk, arms expanded widely, and legs far apart. Pointing to the mark, the seer said, with bated breath, "The effigies made by your enemy were like that! Do you believe me now? How terrible is the danger that menaces you; but, happily, I can assist you to ward it off."

A metal plate or salver, a little salt, and an iron nail were required at this stage, and were produced. Three pinches of the salt [1] were cast upon the dark portentous mark which still disfigured my arm, and then the Brahman gradually washed it out by rubbing it with the iron nail repeatedly dipped in the water. He next placed the rose on the salver, and after passing it round my head a particular number of times, he made me pour three and a half handfuls of water upon it. From his wallet he produced a bit of old flat iron about three inches long and three-fourths of an inch wide. This he placed in the salver. Still muttering spells and invoking gods and saints (the names of Jesus and Muhammad being strangely blended with the names of the gods and goddesses of the Hindu Pantheon), he asked for

[1] That demons hate or dread salt is an old and widespread superstition. See Conway's "Demonology and Devil-lore," ii. p. 297.

some clothes which had been worn by me. The required articles, having been produced, were placed by him under my feet. Next the inevitable piece of silver was required, and when handed to him was deposited in the salver. I was requested to step over it and back again three times. Now followed more mutterings of spells. The salver was made to rest on both my hands, and the Brahman bid me fix my attention upon the piece of iron lying on it in the water. Speaking after my friend, as I may now call him, I transferred to the lifeless bit of old iron in the tray the curses which had been heaped upon me and mine by our unknown, but not less dangerous foe. While the Brahman muttered his mantras for my preservation, I waited with no very lively curiosity to see what the next proceeding would be. Suddenly I was startled by the scrap of inanimate iron making a lively jump quite out of the salver which was resting on my hands. It fell upon the Brahman's thigh as he sat squat upon the carpet. With well-feigned excitement he interpreted this incident as establishing satisfactorily that the rite we had performed had had the desired effect. The spell cast upon me and mine had been broken.

I thought the business was over, as the Brahman said that the impending evil having been averted by his counter spells, my good fortune would now be very great. Rising above vague generalities, he ventured upon the specific prediction that within three weeks I should receive information of the most gratifying kind, adding that when the happy event occurred he would come to me in person and claim a reward of five rupees. Indeed he was even

more explicit in his prediction. A sum of money due to me, the payment of which had been delayed on account of some misunderstanding, would soon be received by me, and I would, probably, before long, leave Lahore for a better appointment elsewhere.

The affair, however, was not quite over yet. It was undoubtedly true that the children and myself were now out of danger, but a special peril still threatened the *Mem Sahib* (the lady). Having averted the danger from myself, surely I would not leave the lady in trouble. Was I sceptical about the risk to which she was still exposed? My doubts could easily be set at rest.

This time a small lump of cotton, dipped in common olive oil, was required and duly provided. Talking volubly, with great apparent earnestness and many confidential whispers, the fortune-teller made us hold the cotton between our hands, placed one upon the other, palm to palm, and after sundry muttered spells he lifted up the cotton and squeezed the oil from it, quite of a blood-red colour. Of course this was only a token of an impending calamity of some sort, to avert which a piece of clean cotton cloth and some silver were needed. The indispensable articles were brought, and after the appropriate mantras had been uttered, became, I need hardly say, the property of the clever fortune-teller.

The business was at last over; the Brahman had only to write out two pieces of paper with cabalistic signs, one in the name of my wife and the other in my name. Whilst so employed a little son

of mine was standing by with a new inkstand in his hand, one of those ordinary traveller's inkstands shaped like a box, with a spring lid. The Brahman wished to see it, took it in his hand, opened it, observed that there was no ink in it, and quietly placed it just before him on the carpet. He slowly completed his cabalistic papers. One was to be thrown into water the next day, together with some *goor* (crude sugar) and a flower; the other to be wrapped up in a piece of red cloth, with a clove and a cardamum, and laid under my pillow, until the fulfilment of his prediction that I should receive, within three weeks, good news of a very acceptable kind.

Affirming for the twentieth time the implicit trust that could be placed upon my every word, he now put the empty inkstand into one of my hands and some old clothes in the other, and getting me to repeat certain words after him, the artful Brahman led me, quite easily and without my perceiving exactly what he was about, to make him a formal present of the inkstand, which I really had had no intention of doing.

I now took up and examined the piece of iron which had indicated, in such a lively and demonstrative manner, its willingness to stand vicariously for us. It was a little bit of ordinary flat iron, doubled over at one end to the extent of about one-sixth of an inch. Wedged, but not tightly, in the fold I found a small white bead, which the Brahman quickly removed when his attention was drawn to it, assuring me that it was only a common bead which must have got in there by accident when the iron

was lying, with a lot of other things, in his bag. But the little intruder, I think, betrayed a secret, for, in all probability, by means of it and the help of a long fine hair, the bit of iron had been persuaded into energetic acceptance of the danger threatening us. As to the figure that had appeared upon my arm, it had, of course, been impressed upon my damp skin as the soothsayer was pretending to show me the exact position in which I should hold my hands in the water.

Our friend was packing up now. From the ready way in which we had carried out his instructions, he must—and naturally enough—have concluded that he had credulous dupes to deal with, and so made a last attempt to derive profit either from my superstitious fears or my unwariness. Pointing to the bit of iron which I had replaced in the salver, he requested me to tell him to take that away, together with the dangers which had been threatening us. Too wide-awake this time to be taken in, I lifted the iron out of the salver, and, handing the rusty scrap of metal to him, told him to take it away. This ended the proceedings.

And now for the fulfilment of the prediction of speedy good news. Well, no good news of any kind reached me; but—such is the irony of fate—on the very last day of the three weeks within which I was to receive glad tidings, a letter was handed to me containing the most disappointing piece of intelligence affecting my own prospects which could well have been imagined. In this way were the truthful Brahman's predictions fulfilled. Let him look to it in the next world. For, if we

may trust Dante, our Brahman seer, and men of his kind, having presumed to look too far ahead, will for ever wander backwards about the dismal pit with their heads turned round and set the contrary way on their shoulders—and they will richly deserve their punishment.

I cannot hope to have given my reader an adequate idea of the art and power of the crafty Brahman. His earnest and continued appeals to God, his constant and solemn invocations of curses upon his own head if he were departing from the truth, were really very impressive, even to me who had no reason to place the smallest confidence in him. I can well understand how, under ordinary circumstances, such a man could play upon the credulity and fears of the ignorant and superstitious Hindus; how weak, impulsive women would be ready dupes of his clever appeals to their hopes and fears, how he would excite their curiosity, how his sleight of hand would impose upon them, and how the respect and awe inspired by his sacred character as a Brahman would complete the delusion of his victims.

On another occasion I allowed a Brahman fortune-teller to practise his art at my expense. His method of proceeding was somewhat different from that already described. He did not commit himself to any reckless statements in regard to my past life, nor did he venture any very definite predictions about my future. He confined himself to saying that I had a certain object in view, the accomplishment of which I earnestly desired, and that he could easily satisfy me whether I should gain my end or not.

After examining my hand, and getting my palm crossed with silver, he made me procure a piece of thread, break it myself into five bits, roll the fragments up together and drop them, hap-hazard, on a strip of cloth covered with various cabalistic signs and figures. The process of dropping the thread on the mystic cloth was repeated several times, the Brahman pretending to take special note of the particular signs upon which the ball of thread fell on each occasion. Once, however, he asked me to separate and count the pieces of thread, in order, as he said, that there might be no mistake about the matter. I did so. At length he handed me the pellet of thread, requesting me to place it in my mouth. I had next to wash my hands and cross them on my breast, solemnly fixing my thoughts on God, and calling to mind any wish I might have specially at heart. I was also to blow five times on the back of my hands as they lay crossed on my breast. While I remained in this position, the Brahman kept repeating various mantras in Sanskrit. He assured me that if a mark appeared on the palm of my left hand, my wish would be fulfilled after the lapse of a considerable time; but that if a mark appeared on the palm of my right hand, I might calculate upon the speedy accomplishment of my hopes. I removed my hands, the left one first. There was no mark on it. But the right hand bore a conspicuous one on the centre of the palm, seeing which the Brahman said that all would be well with me. He then got some more money, which had to be passed over and round my head three times, with the prayer that all my misfortunes might pass away.

At this stage the fortune-teller requested me to remove the pellet of thread from my mouth, saying that if the pieces had joined together, then every possible doubt in regard to the fulfilment of my wishes would be removed. I took the thread out of my mouth, and, sure enough, there was but one long piece instead of five little ones. The Brahman now put some salt in my hand, upon the dark mark, and with the rupees and salt rubbed it out, as well as he could, and eventually obliterated it completely, with the aid of five roses, which had been brought for the purpose from my garden. Finally, as a parting admonition, the seer warned me to be very circumspect in what I said; always to keep my own counsel, and not even to relate my dreams to any one. Desiring every soul to quit the room, he whispered into my ear a secret recipe for the preparation of a sweetmeat — of which I dare not particularize the ingredients—which would possess the strange property of winning for me the sympathy and affection of any person who might partake of it. Seeing my evident surprise at the nature of his prescription, the Brahman told me that I might please myself about making use of the knowledge he had imparted to me, but that I need not fear to act upon his recommendation, for the sin (*goonah*), if any, would be on his head, not mine. Throughout the proceedings the Brahman swore by his sacred thread and by his son, who had accompanied him and was waiting in the verandah outside.

The reader will probably expect me to give an explanation, should I have one to offer, regarding the appearance of the black mark on my hand and the

joining up of the five pieces of thread in my mouth. I must confess that, although I was as vigilant as possible, the clever dexterity of the Brahman eluded my suspicious watchfulness over his proceedings, so that I am not in a position to say how his tricks were actually accomplished, though possible explanations have occurred to me. One always fancies that one can unmask the clever juggler, but generally the wish to show him up is stronger than the ability to do so.

It will be evident from the foregoing narrative what a clever, worldly-wise fellow the Indian fortune-teller is. He travels much—I have met the same man at Agra and at Lahore—and he skilfully adapts himself to every age and to all circumstances of life. I remember a Brahman telling me my fortune at Calcutta when I was quite a youth. At that impressionable time of life, what more appropriate road to the purse that the tender passion? So the crafty Brahman solemnly assured me that a married friend of mine, young and good looking, was madly in love with me, and offered me his assistance to bring us together.

Brahman fortune-tellers are the astrologers who play so important a part in the every-day life of the Hindu.

They are consulted, especially by the women, before taking nearly every important or trivial step in life. Is a throne to be ascended? Is a battle to be fought? The astrologer must name the proper time.[1] Is a marriage to be arranged? The astrologer must

[1] Elliot's "Muhammadan Historians of India," by Prof. Dowson, vol. v. p. 77. "Voyages de François Bernier," tome i. pp. 213 216. Amsterdam, 1699.

give his approval and must fix the auspicious day. Is a journey to be undertaken? The astrologer must appoint the day upon which to set off. Has the weather become so hot that people wish to leave their rooms and transfer their beds to the flat terraced roofs of their houses? The astrologer must tell them when this important migration should be carried out. Is the love of a man or a woman desired? The astrologer is again appealed to for charms and spells and love-potions.

Pausing one day, just for a minute, by the Bohar gate, near the little bridge over the canal which forms the favourite bathing-place of the people of Multan, a picturesque and interesting scene presented itself to my view. On one side of the bridge the men and on the other the women, very much undraped, were enjoying their morning bath. On the steps leading from the water I noticed a woman in clean new garments whose graceful form attracted my attention. Ascending the flight of steps, she passed through the precincts of the temple of Siva and deposited a small offering before the *lingam*. An hour afterwards I was at the ancient temple of Prahladpuri, and observed, through the wide open door, the same woman, in close consultation with a Brahman in an adjoining building. The priest was unfolding before her a long roll of astrological paper, and with a look of great apparent sincerity seemed helping her to unveil the secrets of the future. Of what he said or what she wished to know, I have, of course, no knowledge; but probably an interesting romance was there being worked out under the cunning hands of the wily Brahmans.

That the Indian fortune-teller can sometimes play a prominent and personal part in the drama of domestic life will appear from the following characteristic story which was related to me by a Muhammadan who knew the parties concerned. A woman whose husband had gone on a journey was very anxious about his prolonged absence from home, as she had received no letter from him since his departure. What more natural than to consult an astrologer? He would surely know what was the matter with the absent man. The reader of secrets was accordingly interviewed very privately. The astrological books were no doubt referred to, and, instructed by the stars, the seer was able to say that at midnight on a certain day of the month her husband would return home; but, for very private and important reasons, would not wish his visit to be known to any one. She was accordingly to keep the matter a dead secret, and on no account to awaken the curiosity or suspicions of her neighbours by any preparations or unusual proceedings. The appointed night arrived, and with it a gentle tap on the door and a low voice asking admission. The woman opened the door of her house with eagerness and admitted her silent and muffled visitor, who, affecting to be very tired, found his way to the little *charpoy* and lay down upon it, inviting the woman to join him. It was not long before she discovered, even in the darkness of the little cabin, that her visitor and her husband were very different persons. What was she to do? Had the wretch who occupied the bed come to murder her for her gold and silver ornaments? Should she call out for help? She was alone and at the mercy of

a possibly armed man. Protesting that her lord should not sleep without food after his long journey, she commenced cooking some *poorics*, cakes fried in oil. The firelight confirmed her suspicions, and the man in the charpoy, no other than the Brahman astrologer, feeling he was detected, attempted to snatch some ornaments from her person, but she seized the pot and poured the boiling oil over him. His involuntary cries of pain roused the neighbours and led to his apprehension.

Muhammadans also go about pretending to predict fortunes. They use dice in their divinations, and, if I may judge from those with whom I have come in contact, are but shallow fellows in comparison with their Brahman rivals.

"According to an assertion of the Prophet, what a fortune-teller says may be true; because one of the jinn steals away the truth, and carries it to the magician's ear; for the angels come down to the region next the earth (the lowest heaven), and mention the works that have been pre-ordained in heaven; and the devils (or evil jinn) listen to what the angels say, and hear the orders predestined in heaven and carry them to the fortune-tellers. It is on such occasions that shooting stars are hurled at the devils. It is said that 'the diviner obtains the services of the Sheytan (Shaitan) by magic arts, and by names invoked, and by the burning of perfumes, and he informs him of secret things.'"[1]

As might be expected, it occasionally happens that the predictions of the astrologers turn out correct. In that case the word is carried from mouth to mouth, and the fame of the fulfilled prophecy travels far and wide; but when events do not tally with the declared anticipations of the prophet, the ignorant are readily persuaded that the nonfulfilment

[1] Hughes' "Dictionary of Islam," art. Magic.

of the prediction is due entirely to some want of formality or exactitude in carrying out the ceremonies prescribed by the Brahman.

A very interesting instance of the fulfilment of a Brahmanical prophecy will be found recorded in Colonel Meadows Taylor's Autobiography. A written prediction based upon the horoscope of the Rajah of Sholapoor was shown to the Colonel, under a solemn promise of secrecy, many years before the predicted events came to pass. In this document the astrologer had foretold that the Rajah would lose both his state and his life before he attained the age of twenty-four, and the prophecy was verified to the letter under very peculiar circumstances. The story is well told by Colonel Taylor, but from other opinions and statements in his autobiography, there would appear to be reason to believe that the gallant officer was not without a tincture of superstition in his nature, which may have coloured his view and perhaps his narrative of this event. Besides, as horoscopes are consulted in all Hindu families, it is very improbable that the Rajah of Sholapoor's horoscope was kept so profound a secret as Colonel Taylor imagined. Any way, a lucky bit outweighs a thousand misses, and the world of India goes on, as it has done for ages, consulting the stars in their progress, and easily duped by, but ever trusting with childlike confidence, its astute hereditary priesthood, as, I think, the following extract from a native paper conducted in English will show:

"It is reported from Bombay that a Bania, named Trikamdas, an inhabitant of Ahmedabad, was informed by a Brahman

that his death would take place on a certain day in the month of Vaisakh. Thereupon the Bania repaired to the holy shrine of Palitana to perform his funeral rites. But not dying on due date, he returned to Ahmedabad and interviewed the Brahman, who said that he had made a mistake in the calculation, and that Trikamdas would die in the month of Srayan. The devotee has thereupon gone back to Palitana to die!"[1]

Could faith or credulity go further?

India, indeed, is pre-eminently the land of sooth-sayers and fortune-tellers, and has given to Europe the race of gipsies so well known in story and, to a slighter extent, in real life.

[1] *Tribune*, June 24, 1882.

III.

A STRANGE CULT; THE WORSHIP OF ZÂHIR-PIR.

"The Lalbegis once a year erect a long pole covered with flags, coloured cloth, and other things, including cocoa-nuts, in honour of Pir Zahir, or Lal Guru, as he is likewise called; to which they render worship as to a god. In this they are like the low Muhammadans, who worship a similarly decorated pole erected to Gazi-Mian, a pir or saint."—SHERRING'S "Hindu Tribes and Castes as represented at Benares."

ON the fertile religious soil of India there flourish, in rank luxuriance, many strange forms of worship, one of which forms the subject of this paper.

The quotation at the head of the page alludes, very briefly, to the religious observances I am about to describe; but, like too many such condensed descriptions, it is not quite accurate, for, as far as I have been able to learn, the pole is nowhere *worshipped as a god.*

At Bâgar, in the district of Bikanir, is the tomb of a Pir or saint, well known from the Himalayas to the Narbada, of whom the following marvellous and unmeaning story is told.[1]

[1] The legend as I give it in this paper differs in some, though not very essential, points from that contained in General

A Rajah of Bâgar-des had two wives (twin sisters resembling one another very closely), Bâchal and Kâchal by name. Both were childless, and both anxious to become mothers. Bâchal, perhaps even more than her sister, longed for the honour of maternity. In order to obtain her object, Bâchal served Guru Goracknâth, a celebrated yogi, in a menial capacity for some twelve years. The all-powerful yogi, who lived in the Rajah's garden at Bâgar, pleased with her assiduous attentions to him, promised that on a certain date he would grant her request. In the meanwhile, the Rajah's sister was doing her utmost to get him to repudiate Bâchal, who, she said, had degraded herself by performing menial offices even for a yogi, and ought to be sent back to her own people. Unaware of the intrigues in the palace, Bâchal was looking forward with eager hope to the fulfilment of the yogi's promise, which she had foolishly (as after events proved) made known to her twin sister Kâchal. On the appointed day Kâchal rose very early, and, trusting to the close resemblance she bore her twin sister, presented herself before the yogi, boldly asking him to redeem his promise. The holy man, unconscious of the deception that was being practised upon him, put two grains of wheat into her hand with instructions to eat them, upon doing which her wish would be accomplished. Thus reaping where she had not sown, the unscrupulous and unsisterly Kâchal hurried away home. A little later Bâchal

Cunningham's Archæological Report for 1878-79, vol. xiv. The General does not deal with the religious ceremonies and observances I have described.

came and prostrated herself before Guru Goracknâth, claiming the promised reward of her long and faithful ministrations. The saint was puzzled and, after what had occurred in the morning, not a little incensed at Bâchal's request; but when he understood the real state of the case, said that though he had already given two sons to Kâchal, he would not suffer the woman who had served him with so much devotion for years to go away unrewarded. To this end he handed her an apple, of which she was to eat three-fourths and give the remainder to her favourite mare. While these events were transpiring, the Rajah's sister had succeeded in inducing him to put Bâchal away, and the unfortunate princess was accordingly packed off to her ancestral home. In due course Kâchal became the mother of twin sons, and the event was celebrated with great rejoicings. Bâchal's time was also drawing nigh, but she was now in her father's house. At this stage certain marvellous events occurred. Bâchal's unborn child, addressing its mother, advised her to go back to her husband's home, as it would not be creditable for him to be born away from the paternal roof. The mother objected that her father would never hear of her returning to a husband who had repudiated her and that if she insisted upon going she would have to walk the whole way, as she would, on no account be helped by her own people in carrying out such a project. The child then told its mother to have the tree that stood before their house felled, and a cart made out of the wood. As for oxen to draw it, he informed his mother that if she sent a servant into the neighbouring forest, he would there find a pair

named Sona and Mona, ready for use. The mother pointed out that the only carpenter available was blind, but the child got over that difficulty by telling her to instruct the carpenter in question to press his hands over his eyes and his sight would be restored. Everything turned out exactly as the child had predicted. The cart was duly made, the oxen found and yoked to it, and the journey towards Bâgar commenced. Freighted with such an important burden, the cart, as it passed along, seemed to shake the earth to its very foundations. The king of the *serpents* was in his subterranean kingdom, and sent some huge snakes to destroy the audacious mortals who dared to invade his repose. His commands were so far carried out, that the driver of the cart and the two oxen were killed; but Bâchal escaped on foot, and returned to her father's house in deep distress. She upbraided the child who had caused all this trouble, but he maintained that neither the oxen nor the driver were dead, and desired her to send men to inquire about them. True enough, they were found restored to life, and, after a little delay, the journey was resumed. The Rajah of Bâgar-des received his wife back again, and the marvellous child was ushered into the world with the customary rejoicings. Shortly after his birth, he was, in accordance with universal custom in India, laid in the sun, in order to be purified by the rays of that god. He was left alone for a few minutes, and when his attendants returned they found him playing with a deadly cobra. They looked on in mute terror, which turned to horror and amazement when they saw him put the cobra's head

into his own mouth and suck it. The infant, *mirabile dictu*, suffered no harm, and this incident, I was gravely assured, gave rise to his popular name of Zâhir-Pir (or poison saint).[1] When he arrived at man's estate he succeeded his father on the *musnud*. Of course a wife was found for him, and while he was away from home on a visit to his bride's father, his brothers (the twin sons of Kâchal) plotted to seize the throne with the assistance of the Emperor of Delhi. The young prince had only just reached home with his bride, when he was obliged to defend himself against a force raised at Delhi and headed by his brothers. In hot haste he collected such of his men as were at hand, and mounting his steed Leilah, a foal of the mare that had been favoured with a bit of the yogi's apple, he set out to meet his adversaries. When about to start for the battle-field, his mother laid her solemn injunctions upon him to spare the lives of his brothers.

In the heat of the contest that ensued, Zâhir-Pir was miraculously protected from harm. The birds hovered over him to shield him from the sun, they received on their own wings the bullets that would have struck him. His mare Leilah performed wonders. She literally flew about, and in one of her wild swoops the Pir's sword struck off the heads of both his brothers at one stroke, and, in some inexplicable manner, they rolled into his lap. He gathered up his clothes round his waist with the two heads, and rode on. The chiefs thus disposed of, the

[1] General Cunningham says that this saint "received his title of Zâhir-Pir, or the 'manifested saint,' because he appeared to his wife after death" (Archæological Report, vol. xiv. p. 84).

battle was over. His enemies melted from the field, and Zâhir-Pir returned home. At the gate he was met by his mother, whose first question was about the fate of Kâchal's sons. Instead of replying, the exhausted soldier asked for water; but without giving him what he wanted she again pressed him for news of his brothers. Iritated at her solicitude regarding the fate of his treacherous foes, the victor told her that he had brought some cocoa-nuts for her, and, so saying, rolled out upon the floor the bloody heads which he had carried in his girdle. The old Ranee started back with horror from these gory trophies, and in her indignation vowed that she would see her son's face no more.

Up to this time the prince had been a Hindu. He now turned Muhammadan, and went off alone on a pilgrimage to Mecca. His mother thought he was dead, and his young bride mourned his loss, but he came back safe and well, and secretly made himself known to his wife, whom he found means of visiting clandestinely. An evident change in the bearing and manners of the supposed widow, her cheerfulness and gaiety, so out of harmony with her condition, aroused the suspicions of the mother-in-law. The old Ranee reproached her daughter-in-law with forgetting her duty as a widow, and even accused her of unfaithfulness to her dead husband. Stung by the keen edge of the old lady's tongue, the princess determined to clear her character. She invited her mother-in-law to conceal herself in her bed-room at night. The prince came as usual. The mother recognized her son. All her maternal affection went out towards him, and, unmindful of her vow, she

rushed forward to embrace him; but the prince, who had been deeply mortified by his mother's conduct and her vow, fled away hastily and never returned again. His mother had him searched for high and low, far and near, but without avail. At length it was discovered that he had found a quiet refuge in the bosom of mother Earth, into which he had gently descended, steed and all, leaving only the head of his spear and the pennon attached to it to mark the spot of his engulfment. On this now sacred spot his mother erected a mausoleum, which is the centre of attraction to his followers.

Somehow this Pir has been specially selected as the patron saint of the Lalbagis, a section of the *Mehter* or sweeper caste, who, in affliction or trouble, vow to make certain offerings at his tomb, or in his name, in the hope, or on condition, that he will help them in their distress. But the tomb is remote from the great centres of population and wealth. Lalbagis, like other people, need some more present object to quicken their devotion and open their purse-strings than a distant grave. This the custodians of the tomb thoroughly understand, so they periodically send out missionaries to remind the Lalbagis of the necessity of contributing towards the maintenance of the tomb and its guardians, if they desire to enjoy a continuance of the blessings secured to them through the favour of the saint.

The missionaries, who are Mussulmans, go over the country promising the protection and good offices of the Pir to those who will become his followers. Offerings of some sort are, of course, expected, and empty-handed worshippers are of little account.

Men who in infancy were specially dedicated by their parents, with suitable ceremonies and offerings, to the saint of Bâgar, enjoy certain privileges on the occasions selected for publicly honouring their patron. As might have been expected, children devoted to the special service of the Pir are generally sickly ones, for whom his fostering care is deemed necessary.

In their periodical wanderings, the missionaries of the *Zâhir-Pir* grant, for a stipulated consideration, permission to a few mehters in each district to raise the standard of the saint for a fixed number of days, and to carry it about in procession. These privileged men are known as *Bhaggats*. I believe it is generally understood that they have visited the saint's tomb in person and been authorized on the spot "to raise his standard," as the phrase is. According to popular belief, the standard, at any rate a portion of it, is received direct from the custodians of the Pir's tomb, upon which it has been duly laid, thus acquiring a portion of the sacredness of the holy spot from which it comes. The custodians of the tomb at Bâgar exercise a sufficient control over the Bhaggats, and insist upon the observance by them of the customary practices. A case of irregularity happened at Lâhore in 1885. A Bhaggat, in order to steal a march upon the others, set up his standard before the usual time, and began to circumambulate the city for contributions. He met with tolerable success; but on the representation of the other Bhaggats he was fined and severely reprimanded by the missionaries from Bâgar, who moreover allowed the other Bhaggats to extract from him his irregularly-gotten gains.

The standard consists of a long bamboo tricked out with scraps of gay-coloured cloth, having at the top of it a sort of huge brush, covered on the outside with peacocks' feathers. Along the length of the pole are suspended bunches of cocoa-nuts, with fans and *moorchals*. This is the appearance it has to an uninitiated onlooker. Indeed, I was for a long time under the impression that the pole, with the tuft of feathers at the top, was nothing but a huge broom, the most important implement of the mehter's (sweeper's) trade. But I was utterly wrong. To the initiated this huge broom adorned with flags, fitted to a gigantic handle, and carried by a man, is transfigured into *a bridegroom dressed out in his wedding garments, and seated on horseback*. In fact, it represents Zâhir-Pir himself on the memorable occasion of his return home with his bride, the occasion on which he slew his half-brothers and incurred the displeasure of his mother. The cocoa-nuts, I presume, have some connection with the Pir's grim jest about the heads of the sons of Kâchal, but why there should be more than two suspended to the pole I failed to find out. In such cases consistency can hardly be expected, and should not, perhaps, be looked for. Already, it would appear, the symbolical character of the cocoa-nuts is forgotten, and it is an object of pride to the Bhaggat to outdo his rivals in the number of nuts suspended from his pole. The fans and moorchals are probably attached as emblems of royal, or at any rate of exalted, rank.

The dressing up of the pole, or standard as they call it, is quite an elaborate affair, and is carried out to the accompaniment of the drum and vocal music.

The tall bamboo is first anointed with mustard oil, next coloured with a yellow ochre, and then washed with milk sponged over it with a handful of *doob* grass. After these anointings and ablutions the *sirmohr*, or head-dress, is tied on. The head-dress is only worn by bridegrooms on their wedding day. Two large triangular pieces of cloth, one blue, the other red, are next attached to the pole, and the costume of the bridegroom is completed by the addition of a couple of fans, one or two moorchals, and a large number of cocoa-nuts tied about the place where his neck might have been and right away to the bottom of the pole.

The festival in honour of Zâhir-Pir takes place about the month of July or August every year. A great number of people assemble to see the standard raised, and follow it to the accompaniment of a noisy band of drummers and fifers. Disciples specially dedicated to the saint enjoy the privilege on such occasions of acting as his *horses*. They carry the standard by turns, supported in a sort of strong leather cup sewn on to a stout belt of the same material fastened *round the waist*. By this arrangement the hands are free to steady the pole and keep it erect. As each man (or "horse") receives the sacred burden, he salutes it with joined palms and a look of wrapt adoration, the genuine character of which there is no reason to doubt. The privilege of carrying the standard is a much coveted one. Each "horse," as he staggers about under the sacred burden, shouts out, "I am his horse," while the followers cry, "Victory to Zâhir-Pir." To carry the fiction of their equine nature still further, the "horses" are

actually made to eat some *gram* (a pulse on which horses are fed in India) and a few blades of green grass.

Wrought upon by the drumming and shouting, the "horses" imitate the pawing of a spirited steed, and prance about as much as the weight of the pole and their own strength will permit; but should they begin to caper too much, the Bhaggat smacks his whip, made of iron chains mounted on an iron handle. Should their capering be due to their being possessed by some demon unfriendly to the Pir, the Bhaggat soon whips the unwelcome intruder out of his subject; but it is well known that if the capering of the "horse" be due merely to the influence of the sacred afflatus of the "Pir Sahib," why then the whip of iron chains falls quite harmlessly upon the back of the lively steed, and there is more glory to Zâhir-Pir. To steady the pole and obviate any chance of its falling, a catastrophe which might be followed by very grave consequences, it is usual, though not absolutely necessary, to have three or four long stay-ropes attached high up. The ends of these are held by appointed persons, whose duty it is to watch the pole and keep it as vertical as possible. Should the pole, however, owing to the curvetting or awkwardness of the "horse," lean over too much to one side, a shout is immediately raised of "*Kurrhyee! Kurryhee!*" which means *dish, dish*. The "horse" is immediately relieved of his sacred burden, his belt is formally taken away, and he is deprived of his privileges until he atones for his carelessness by treating his caste-mates to a *dish* of sweetmeats.

All who follow the procession are expected to have

had a bath and to have put on clean clothes. They are required to attend barefooted and to dispense with the luxury of an umbrella. Beyond following the standard and shouting "Zâhir-Pir Ke Jye," or victory to Zâhir-Pir, the adoration consists, practically, in a humble obeisance to the decorated pole on the part of each person, and the presentation of some gift, however trifling, to what we may call the lessees of the standard.

Women, always in an inferior position in the East, are on no account to touch the sacred pole. If they have offerings to make they hand them to the Bhaggat, who graciously accepts the gifts and then, after applying a bundle of peacock's feathers to the pole, touches the female worshippers with it in token of the Pir's goodwill and protection.

After being carried about for hours with deafening shouts and more deafening drumming, the standard is taken to a river, whither the other standards from the same town are also carried on the same day. The bearer steps into the stream and, raising some of the water in his hand, pays his respects to the river. A day or two later the standard is carried round on a begging expedition, which, in the particular case I took note of, was hardly successful, seeing that the net result of, the whole day's work was only one rupee, and four annas. It is also taken on an appointed day to the house of any one who is willing to give a feast or a present in fulfiment of some vow or other.

On a bright moonlight night all the standards are set up in some populous centre, and a *mela* or fair is held there. Stalls for the sale of sweets and tea, &c., are arranged upon the spot, and merry-go-rounds

are erected for the amusement of the young. Fun and frolic reign supreme, and the fair is kept up to a late hour. The hoarded or borrowed pice (more frequently the latter) are freely produced, and go to swell the gains of the enterprising dealers in the saint's good offices. On the following day all the standards are carried to some appointed meeting-place with any amount of tom-toming, singing, and noise. The cocoa-nuts are now removed from the sacred pole, and some of them are given as prizes to the successful competitors in foot-races or other sports, open to all comers. The remainder of the cocoa-nuts are distributed in little pieces to the saint's followers, by whom they are much prized as charms. In this distribution the "horses" get the largest share, and sometimes they even receive a small proportion of the Bhaggats' profits. It is easy to see how the honoured position accorded to the "horses" at these religious gatherings becomes an object of desire; and how parents, to secure the envied precedence for their sons on such public occasions, are willing to pay the price demanded by the dispensers of such favours. My inquiries satisfied me that, apart from any theoretical considerations, it was a subject of pride to a Mehter's family to have one member at least enrolled as one of the Pir's "horses."

The practical working of this system and the nature of the worship may be illustrated by the following facts. On one occasion of the annual celebration a quarrel arose as to who should carry the standard. One young man got possession of it, and was acting "horse," when he received a blow on the face which

caused the standard to sway and nearly fall to the ground. The blow which caused this was clearly an act of sacrilege. It was a blow given to a young man while acting in the capacity of "Ghora," or horse, to the "Pir Sahib," and could only be expiated by a heavy fine and a general feast to the caste fellows. There and then the excited crowd excommunicated the bold and impious man whose hand had struck the offensive blow, and it was months, nay years, before he was quite reinstated in social position amongst his brethren; not, indeed, until the emissaries from Bâgar had themselves condoned his rash act for a certain number of rupees and a promise of better behaviour in the future. On another occasion a young fellow entrusted with the standard allowed his attention to wander towards the women, and the pole became unsteady. A zealous, but too rash attendant, *not himself a Ghora*, carried away by his indignant feelings, ventured to strike the pole-bearer, and for this irregularity his hand become partially paralyzed, and only recovered its full power after years of propitiation had appeased the outraged saint. As for the too eager admirer of the fair sex, he became very ill and lost his life shortly after.

To give something of a serious, solemn character to the elevation of the Pir's standard, all the "horses" are required to undergo a sort of purificatory penance for a month previous to the ceremony. They are required to abstain from all indulgences, and to sleep not on a bed of any kind, but on the bare floor, alone, and quite apart from all other members of the family. When in attendance on the standard, they

are expected to keep their minds free from carnal thoughts and desires. I heard of the case of one man who met with a severe fall while attending the procession. The nature of the accident was much exaggerated, and was attributed to the Pir's anger at some unbecoming thoughts having entered into the mind of the sufferer. And within my own knowledge a case of severe illness was put down confidently to an infringement of the strict rules for the conduct of a pure life enjoined on these occasions. The Pir, unfortunately, cannot or will not give a favourable answer to every prayer. A little infant was dying in our compound of what seemed to me to be want of nourishment. The father begged a rupee and received it. I naturally concluded he would buy milk and such-like suitable food for the little starveling; but after the child's death, which took place within a day or two, I found out that the rupee had been put into a small bag and tied round the child's neck, with the vow that if Zâhir-Pir would preserve the little one's life, the rupee would be expended in the purchase of a kid to be sacrificed in his honour.

The curious cult of which I have just given an outline sketch is not undeserving of study. The Mehters are an inferior caste, subdivided into seven sub-castes, one of these (the Shaik) professing the Muhammadan religion. The other six sub-castes, including the Lalbagi, although reverencing the Brahmans and holding strictly enough to caste observances, do not, as far as I have been able to ascertain, consider themselves Hindus. Whether the Mehters are descendants of Hindu out-castes, or of aborigines who have adopted the caste system, I cannot say. At

the present day their occupation is for the most part that of sweepers and scavengers. The Lalbagis then, be it remembered, are rejected of Hinduism. They do not even call themselves Hindus, although often classed as such by Europeans. They are certainly not Mussulmans. But, like a race of out-castes, they haunt the outer courts of the temples of both religions to pick up such crumbs of comfort as they may be permitted to appropriate. They believe in Brahman; they consult him on most occasions of life and he takes their money. The Mussulman

not been able to ascertain. For the patron saint no greater antiquity is at present claimed than the age of Akbar, A.D. 1556–1605.

What a certain popular school of mythologists could make out of the stories which have clustered about the name of Zâhir-Pîr, I would not venture to say. Perhaps they could prove that the whole is a solar allegory; a myth of the dawn, or something o that sort. The Pir's voice before birth is perha the fresh breeze which precedes the rising son. I conquest of the serpents,[1] a victory over clouds darkness. His wonder[illegible] or war his na[illegible] ; y ro

his disappearance into the bosom of mother earth. Finally his spiritual re-birth. Mr. Tylor has shown admirably, and most ingeniously, how even a nursery rhyme, like "four and twenty blackbirds baked in a pie," may be explained as a solar myth. But we have so many old stories explained as solar myths or myths of the dawn or fire, that one can hardly resist the temptation of speculating regarding the fate of such a legend as that of Zâhir-Pir in the hands of certain professed comparative mythologists. We are told that—

"The story of Herakles life and labours is a pure but most elaborate sun-myth. From his birth, where he strangles the serpents in his cradle—the serpents of darkness, like the python which Apollo slew—through his *Herculean* labours to his death, we watch the labours of the sun through the mists and clouds of heaven to its ruddy setting; and these stories are so like to others which are told of the northern Herakles, Thorr, that we cannot refuse to believe that they were known in the main in days before there were either Greek-speaking Greeks or Teutons."[1]

Again, the well-known story of William Tell, which proved to have really no foundation in history, is, it appears, nothing but a solar myth:

"William Tell, whether of Cloudland or Altdorf, is the last reflection of the beneficent divinity of daytime and summer, constrained for a while to obey the caprice of the powers of cold and darkness, as Apollo served Laomedon, and Herakles did the bidding of Eurystheus. His solar character is well preserved, even in the sequel of the Swiss legend, in which he appears no less skilful as a steersman than as an archer, and in which, after traversing, like Dagon, the tempes-

[1] Kearny's "The Dawn of History," p. 136

tuous sea of night, he leaps at daybreak in regained freedom upon the land, and strikes down the oppressor who has held him in bondage." [1]

The story of the wanderings of Ulysses, and a hundred other stories equally well known, are, we learn from the mythologists, sun myths and nothing more. The histories of Buddha and Jesus of Nazareth have been denied all historical foundation, and been explained away as solar allegories, according to the approved principles of interpretation adopted by an influential school of mythologists.

To my mind it seems probable (I write with great deference to the opinions of learned mythologists) that at least a large number of the so-called *solar myths* have originated in the circumstances of the life of some very substantial human being distinguished above his fellows in his day and generation, and that his form seen through the mists of time has loomed larger and larger upon the mental vision of his followers or descendants, who by a very natural process have come to compare him to the most glorious object in nature, the sun, and perhaps have given him some name derived from the great luminary, or even identified him with it. The process has not been one of personifying the sun and inventing a history with apparently human actors built upon the daily or annual course of the sun in the heavens with its attendant incidents, but something very different, viz., the exaggerated comparison of a remarkable human life lived upon this earth of ours, to the progress of the bright orb which in every

[1] "Myths and Myth-makers," by John Fiske, M.A., L.L.B., p. 24.

climate is the most striking object in nature. As to Zâhir-Pir, I think we need not resolve him into an unsubstantial solar myth; but may without much scruple admit that the original of the extravagant legend given in the preceding pages did really walk the earth in human form, and was buried at Bâgar in the desert of Bikanir—although it would be very unwise to follow the Euhemeristic method of simply stripping off all improbabilities in the legend and accepting the remainder as genuine history.

IV.

THE ARYA SAMAJ AND ITS FOUNDER.

THE presence, as rulers, of the Muhammadans in India ever since the beginning of the eleventh century has had an influence upon the religious development of the Hindus, which the historical student can hardly help noting, as successive Hindu reformers appear—at long intervals it is true—on the stage of Indian history, bearing aloft the standard of revolt against the national polytheism and the rigid distinctions of caste. The direct influence of Islam on the teaching of many Indian reformers is unquestionable, and that particular form of the Muhammadan religion known as Sufiism—which, in all probability, owes its origin to a Hindu source (the Vedanta philosophy)—was welcomed home, as it were, by certain Hindus with a warmth which a purely exotic system of ideas would not have called forth.

One important religious reformation, Sikhism, alluded to in a subsequent part of this volume, was undoubtedly due to the stimulating presence of Islam and the natural leaning of the Indian mind to the

doctrines held by the Sufis. The theistic reforms now agitating India are, however, of a somewhat different character from those which preceded them, and bear the unmistakable stamp of Christian influence and of English political and social ideas and principles.

There have been two distinct developments of the modern theistic movement in India, known respectively as the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj. The former is well known in Europe, because the leaders of the sect have been men who deliberately kept themselves as prominently as possible before the English world, visited England, won the personal regard of many Europeans both at home and in India, and unintentionally raised false hopes of their conversion to the religion of Christ. Indeed it is not too much to say that the appreciative welcome given to Brahmoism by many pious Europeans was due to a belief that Brahmoism was the first step towards a great turning of the people of India to the Christian faith.

The Arya Samaj which forms the subject of this paper, though perhaps not less interesting than the Bramo Samaj, is younger, and is certainly less known in Europe.

In November, 1879, a young native gentleman who was well aware of the lively interest I took in the movements for religious and social reform which had for some time past been agitating native society through the length and breadth of India, placed in my hands a programme of the proceedings to be observed on the occasion of the second anniversary of the Lahore Arya Samaj, or Aryan Society. A

glance at the paper showed me that besides the usual reading of reports and election of officers, appropriate to the occasion, there were to be hymns and prayers, lectures in Hindi and English, and the celebration of the "Hom."

As the opportunity was one well worth improving, I made up my mind to be present during a portion, at least, of the ceremonies of the day, particularly the *Hom*[1] sacrifice.

By 7 a.m. of the appointed Sunday, I arrived in my carriage at the Shahalmi gate of the city.[2] There I was joined by several of those bright-faced intelligent youths to be found at the present day in every town of British India, who, under the stimulus of Western education, are in a state of intellectual restlessness, eager for reforms and innovations in what they feel is a backward state of society, and who, with the generous ardour and confidence of boys, hope to be able to recast, upon an improved model, institutions which are the outcome of a hundred influences operating through many an eventful century. But however crude the ideas of

[1] "Homa—a sort of burnt-offering which can be made by Brahmans only. It is only made on special occasions, such as the celebration of a festival, the investiture of a young Brahman with the sacred thread, marriages and funerals. The method of making it is as follows: During the utterance of Mantras, five species of consecrated wood, together with the Dharba grass, rice and butter, are kindled and burnt, and the fire is then kept burning as long as the festival or ceremony lasts. Great efficacy is ascribed to this rite."—Garrett's "Classical Dictionary of India."

[2] The "city" is the native town, outside of which lies the European quarter of Lahore.

these would-be reformers, however utopian many of their schemes, it is impossible not to sympathize with their earnest aspirations for the intellectual and social advancement of their countrymen, and it was with much pleasure that I found my young friends awaiting my arrival at the city gate. Here I had to quit my carriage, for it could not go into the narrow crowded thoroughfares of the native quarter which lay within the gate, and with my companions I walked up the lanes which led to the premises of the Arya Samaj. On the doorway was a board bearing, in large English characters, the words "Arya Samaj," and below that, in smaller characters, the same words in Hindi and Urdu.

Ascending a flight of stairs and passing through a narrow passage, we entered an open space or court, bounded on one side by high and on the remaining three sides by low buildings. The place of meeting was a very humble one, with unsightly walls all round and the open canopy of heaven overhead. In one corner was a recess, perhaps six feet square, roofless like the other portions of the court. Here preparations had been made for the performance of the *Hom* sacrifice. Floor-cloths had been laid down for the visitors to sit upon, and festoons of leaves had been hung in great loops right round the inclosure. The entrance to the little recess where the *Hom* was to be performed was specially adorned in homely but not ungraceful style. A green plantain tree had been placed on each side of the entrance, and garlands of leaves and flowers had been hung between them. These simple attempts at decoration were not unpleasing to the eye, and gave

the meeting-place something of a holiday look. At one end of the open court was placed a small table covered over with a white cloth of English manufacture. Upon it were ranged three brass vases containing flowers. At this table the lecturer stood when, in his appointed turn, he addressed the audience "on the wants of our country." Somewhat in advance of the table, *i.e.*, a little nearer to the centre of the court, there was a small carpet, and a very low table, just a few inches high. These were for the use of the Guru when he read to the audience out of the Vedas.

At the other end of the court three or four musicians were squatted tuning their instruments in a listless fashion. A little way behind them I noticed the Society's charity-box, marked in English and two vernacular languages, the uppermost line and the largest characters being English. There were not more than twenty-five persons in the place when I entered it, but the number gradually increased to about one hundred and fifty men and children. No women were present in the assembly, but I was told that there were a number of them congregated in the upper rooms overlooking the courtyard. None, however, were visible, and I dare say most of the fair ladies behind the purdahs understood little and cared less for the new-fangled proceedings of the Arya Samaj. Those of them who comprehended the matter were, in all probability, opposed to a movement which, if successful, would isolate them from the pomp and excitement of the polytheistic idolatry in which they had been reared. Indeed the woman of India, brought up in

the seclusion of the Zenanas, are, as I have often been told by respectable Indian gentlemen, an insurmountable obstacle to reforms which would simplify the ritual of their religion or lead to the abolition of objectionable but time-honoured rites, ceremonies, and festivals.

The reader who has followed me thus far will, if not already familiar with the subject, wish to be informed who the members of the Arya Samaj are—what distinctive doctrines they profess, and what common objects they have set before themselves? In answer to which questions I shall here quote a passage from a letter which appeared in a Lahore newspaper under the signature of "An Arya," as it gives sufficient information for my present purpose:

"The Arya movement in the Punjab began with the advent of Swami Dayanand Saraswati in the beginning of 1877. This learned Pandit, who is regarded by the people of India as the greatest Vedic scholar of the age, in that year delivered a series of lectures on the ancient civilization of the country. The eyes of the educated community were at once opened. They saw that the reforms which they were advocating, and to which there was so much opposition in the land, could easily be carried out by throwing off all the accumulated excrescences which had grown upon their religious and social systems during the lapse of ages, and by falling back upon their pristine books of authority, *the Vedas*. Dreading still further the growth of materialistic and atheistic views in the country, it was considered expedient to establish places of congregational worship where all should meet once a week to pray and hear lectures and sermons delivered.

"Within the last two years these Samajes which exist in the Punjab, the North-west, and the Deccan have acted as so many safeguards of public morals. They admit among their body all who believe in one God, discard idolatry and regard the Vedas as the original revelation given to man. Their meetings

are open and resorted to by the Hindus and Muhammadans and Christians *all alike*. Such are the aims and such the scope of this useful institution."[1]

The religious writings known as the Vedas to which the members of the Arya Samaj have turned as the original, and perhaps sole, revelation given by God to man are four in number, the earliest being a collection of over a thousand hymns, which, according to our best authorities, date from 1500 to 1000 B.C. The hymns of the *Rig Veda* are of various dates and separate origins, and were, for centuries, preserved orally in different priestly or minstrel families, till finally brought together and embodied in one comprehensive collection such as has been preserved to our own day.[2] Older than the poems of Homer, older than the psalms of David, these venerable hymns are amongst the earliest yearnings of the human heart towards the Deity, which have been preserved to later ages in the records of the past, and must ever possess a special and unique value in the eyes of the student of the evolution of religious thought. The Vedic hymns embody the simple prayers of a pastoral people addressed to the clouds, the storm, the sun, the sky, the dawn, and other such objects and natural phenomena, and reflect, as in a mirror, the grand and ever-varying features of the giant snow-capped mountains over which the wandering Aryans had found their way from "the roof of the world" to the plains of

[1] "Civil and Military Gazette," March 6, 1879.

[2] Prof. Max Dunker's "Ancient History of India," p. 28, on the authority of Prof. Max Muller's "History of Sanskrit Literature."

Northern India. In the Vedic hymns the gods are invited to come down and partake of the sacrifices offered to them, and, in return, are called upon to provide pasture for the cattle and horses, to fill the udders of the cows, to bestow health, wealth, and long life, to afford protection to man and beast against the evil spirits, and to grant their worshippers victory over the enemies of the tribe.

The second, or *Yajur Veda*, prescribes the forms and ceremonies to be observed in the performance of the sacrifices appropriate to different occasions. The third, or *Sama Veda*, consists of a selection of hymns from the *Rig Veda*, to be sung when the juice of the Soma plant was the principal offering made to the gods. The fourth, and last Veda, called the *Atharva Veda*, is a collection of spells, charms, and incantations against sickness and death.

Although the Vedic hymns are plainly the outcome of a very primitive society which had not emerged from the tribal condition, and, although the religion of the Sanskrit-speaking Aryans was chiefly *physiolatry*, or the worship of the forces and phenomena of nature, yet there is in the hymns ample evidence of the fact that, at a very early date, polytheistic, pantheistic, and monotheistic conceptions had all been arrived at by the Aryan *rishis*, and had found expression in immortal song.[1] Indeed, the fact that they lend themselves to all forms of religious thought is what gives to the Vedas their wonderful vitality. Add to this that it was in the Punjab that these

[1] Edgar Quinet's "Le genie des Religions," p. 119. Prof. Sir Monier Williams' "Religious Thought and Life in India," p. 7.

songs of the foreworld first rose to heaven with the patriarchal sacrifices of the earliest Aryan settlers in India, and there is no room for wonder that the Vedas, and the literature that has grown out of them, are objects of especial and fervent veneration to the Hindus of the Land of the Five Rivers, or of the *seven* rivers of the Vedic poets.

The youthful society, which is the subject of this paper, apparently desires, and perhaps deems it an easy task to revive in these days the long extinct Vedic religion, or, as they prefer to call it, *Vedic Theism* of the Sanskrit-speaking Aryans. What the religion of the Vedas really was it may be no easy task to make out now. A competent authority—Professor Sir Monier Williams—says:

"Although the majority of the Hindus believe that the four Vedas contain all that is good, great, and divine, yet these compositions will be found, when taken as a whole, to abound more in puerile ideas than in lofty conceptions. At the same time it is clear that they give no support to any of the present objectionable usages and customs for which they were once, through ignorance of their contents, supposed to be an authority. The doctrine of metempsychosis, or transmigration of souls, which became an essential characteristic of Brahmanism and Hinduism in later times, has no place in the religion of the Veda. Nor do the hymns give any sanction to the prohibition of widow-marriages, the general prevalence of child-marriages, the tyrannical sway of caste, the interdiction of foreign travel, and the practice of idolatry."[1]

It would appear that the Aryas of our day under the leadership of a Mahratta Brahman named Dayanand Saraswati, have agreed to put their faith

[1] "Religious Thought and Life in India," p. 18.

in the *Rig* and *Yajur* Vedas with the commentaries upon them, written prior to the date of the Mahabharata. What doctrines the modern believers in these Vedas actually profess to find sanctioned by the old books, whose authority they acknowledge, I shall endeavour to state, briefly, later on. But I may here remark that Dayanand's views and opinions are rank heresies, stoutly opposed by the orthodox pandits, who, at a large and influential meeting held in Calcutta in the year 1881, placed on record, for the benefit of the Hindu public, their own decision in regard to what books were to be regarded as authoritative scripture, and affirmed very plainly their approval of practices which had been condemned by the reformer.

The *Hom* had not been commenced when I entered the premises of the Arya Samaj. Through the courtesy of certain native gentlemen connected with the ceremonies of the day, I was assigned a seat quite near the place where the sacrifice was to be offered, and had the best possible opportunity of witnessing all the arrangements for, and the entire details of, the interesting performance. The fuel (neatly cut pieces of dry wood) was arranged in a little square sacrificial pit. At each of the four corners of the pit stood a small black candle, if I may call it so, about six inches in height, made up of fragrant gums and other combustibles. Round the sacrificial pit were placed five brass vessels, one containing *ghee* (clarified butter), and the other four a mixture of various grains and spices moistened with ghee and milk. A young *Sannyasi*, learned in Sanskrit-lore, presided at the ceremonies. He was

well and warmly attired, and wore on his head conspicuous turban of orange-yellow cloth.

The firewood and the four odorous candles were ignited, and then the priest commenced to recite Sanskrit mantras, each of which ended with the word *Svaha*, which served as a signal for pouring a ladleful of ghee upon the fire, and casting into it a small quantity of the other offerings.

The language of the golden-tongued *rishis*,[1] the dead language of the dead gods of a long past age, sounded strange, as the Sannyasi rolled out in slow and measured tones the mystic texts appropriate to the occasion. When the whole string of selected mantras had been repeated, some portion of the oblations still remained in the plates. In a whispered consultation amongst the officiating priests it was arranged that the leaders should repeat the *Gayatri* [1] over and over again, while the five assistants kept feeding the flames with the offerings, until the whole quantity that had been provided should be duly consumed.

It is hardly necessary to say with what interest I watched this ceremonial which the Sanskrit-speaking Aryans had practised so many centuries ago at the very dawn of the historical period. But I could not help feeling that the ancient rite had quite lost what significance it might have had in the old time,

[1] The *Gayatri* is a form of prayer, consisting of ten Sanskrit words, which should be used by all Hindus daily, both morning and evening. It is translated as follows by Prof. Monier Williams: "Let us meditate (or we meditate) on that excellent glory of the divine vivifier. May he enlighten (or stimulate) our understandings" ("Hinduism," p. 61).

and that, as performed in my presence that day, it was but a lifeless ghost, a hollow ceremonial, meaningless to the spectators and entirely uncalculated to awaken in them any feelings of enthusiasm, of reverence, or even of solemnity. The attendants, it is true, performed their office with decorum, but I looked in vain for any indication of deep feeling or genuine interest on their features. As for the onlookers, they watched the performance as they might have watched a small bonfire, and listened with dull unconscious ears to the mantras, the Sanskrit language being quite unknown to nearly all of them. Some, indeed, were even less attentive than that. While the *Hom* sacrifice was being performed I noticed two or three young men leaning over the table in the reading-room looking through the newspapers.

In the old time the fire for such a sacrifice would have been kindled by the friction of two pieces of wood, and the goddess of fire (*Agni*) would thus have been mysteriously born again, under the hands of the operator, as the fire-drill (which, if we are to believe the philologists, gave rise to the myth of Prometheus),[1] gradually elicited the living, glowing flames from the dark inert timber. But the obtaining of fire by the friction of wood is a troublesome process, and so our modern *Aryas* preferred the simpler plan of igniting the fuel in the sacrificial pit by means of live charcoal brought from the domestic hearth.

I was amused and interested to find in conversation with several members of the Samaj, that they

[1] Fiske's "Myths and Myth-makers," p. 64.

were disposed to deny the sacrificial character of the *Hom* and to maintain that it was intended to purify the air, for here, as elsewhere, the *Zeitgeist* is too strong to allow of the revival of the old worn-out religions, except as solemn mockeries of things long dead.

At the termination of the *Hom* the musicians struck up a hymn, singing, in a clear but subdued tone, to the accompaniment of their instruments. In regard to Hindu, or any other music, I am not competent to give a critical opinion, but the hymns sung on this occasion had certainly a plaintive sweetness of their own, which was exceedingly agreeable to my ear. The hymns for the day, some in Hindu and some in Punjabi, had been selected from a collection which had been made and printed for the use of the Samaj. But the choir, strange to say, consisted of hired singers of the *Muhammadan* religion, with no faith or heart in the ceremonies or the beliefs of the Aryas. This fact alone would indicate the artificial character of the entire arrangement, and would serve to show how utterly futile is the attempt to revive, for any beneficial purpose, the obsolete practices of a long-past age. As soon as the selected hymns had all been sung, the lecturer took his place at the table. He first repeated the *Gayatri* in slow devout tones, and, in a quavering voice, pronounced the mystic *Om* with marked solemnity. So much had I heard and read about the pious horror of the orthodox twice-born Hindu at the mere thought of uttering this sacred word in the hearing of an outcaste or an unbeliever, that I was not a little surprised to hear it pronounced so

often, as on this day, before a mixed audience, consisting of Hindus of all castes without distinction, and of many persons altogether outside the pale of Hinduism.

The lecturer in his discourse took up what may be called the stock questions of the Hindu reformer. He dwelt upon the weak points of the system of early, or rather infant, marriage. He alluded to the evils that inevitably spring from the cruel rule of Hindu society, which refuses to permit a widow, even a virgin-widow, to wed a second time. He pointed out the urgent necessity that exists for general and technical education, and, above all, for national union and self-help. Turning to more strictly religious topics the lecturer declaimed against idolatry, and scornfully pointed out, apparently with reference to a real existing evil, the absurdity of uneducated people becoming Sannyasis. In denouncing idolatry the lecturer stated that in Vedic times men who bowed down to images made of wood or stone would have been punished like ordinary malefactors—in fact, like thieves and robbers. I am not aware what, if any, historical authority there may be for this statement, but this was the only part of the lecture that met with general applause, indicated by the clapping of hands in quite a European fashion. At the present time there is in Hindu society an almost feverish desire for social reforms of all kinds. No objectionable practice, however old, or however trifling, escapes the keen criticism of men of the rising generation, leavened with new ideas from the West. And it cannot be doubted that the modern spirit of reform will lead, slowly but surely, to the

most satisfactory results. Not long ago a Hindu wrote strongly against "the custom of using obscene language on the occasion of marriage ceremonies," and the singing of immoral songs in the streets by women of respectable families and good position, on the occasion of Hindu festivals (Regenerator of Aryavarta, 22nd December, 1884), and I was told by a young Hindu friend of mine that the *Khattris* in Lahore had taken up the matter in an earnest, practical spirit, and that the *panchyats* of the caste had determined to impose a fine upon any *Khattri* whose wife indulged in obscene songs in the streets of Lahore. Even trifling matters are not above the notice of these energetic reformers, *e.g.*, it has been the custom, at all seasons of the year, to carry, as a present, on the occasion of a visit from the bridegroom's family to the bride's family, two large earthern vessels containing curds. Now, in the hot weather in India, these curds are usually an utter abomination of bad odours, but the practice was still rigidly, I may say religiously, maintained. The Lahore panchyat have now pronounced the observance of this custom unnecessary. From these examples it will be apparent that an honest desire for social improvement has taken possession of a large section of the Hindu community, and that real good work will be done.

At the conclusion of the lecture the musicians again struck up a hymn, and, while they were chanting it, two or three men went round casting flowers over the visitors, and throwing garlands of flowers about their necks. One was placed in my hand, with the remark in English, "Of course, you

need not put this on." And thus ended the proceedings announced for the forenoon of that day.

Three years later, in November, 1882 (or, as the public notice put it, in "the Aryan era, 1,960,892,983"), I again attended the anniversary celebration of the Samaj. There was not much to note in the way of change. Even the Mussalman musicians were in attendance, as in 1879. But such changes as attracted my attention were in the right direction. The meeting-place, the same as on the occasion previously described, showed some well-meant attempts at decoration. I noticed that a couple of small-sized wall-mirrors had been hung up, and that something had been done to cover the bare, unsightly, and dilapidated surrounding walls. The gathering, moreover, was larger than on the occasion of my previous visit, and there were not wanting signs of a healthy and more extended interest in the work of the Society. In fact, the Arya Samaj was clearly getting on in the world. But as clearly also it was experiencing the fate of all more or less successful movements. It was struggling against the opposition aroused by its growth at the expense of older institutions. There appeared to be a controversial tone in the addresses delivered, and it was considered desirable to affirm frequently (evidently in reply to objectors) that the *Hom* was not a religious observance, that it was not a worship of *Agni* (fire); but was carried out from purely sanitary considerations; since the products of the combustion of the particular substances used diffused through the atmosphere of a crowded assembly were of a distinctly healthful character.

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In private conversation with me a member of the Samaj supported this view with some warmth, referring to the common practice of disinfecting barracks, hospitals, and infected places generally by sulphur fumigation. But the reader does not need to be told that the *Hom*, accompanied as it is by the solemn recital of sacred Sanskrit mantras, carried out in the open air, at a professedly religious gathering is not, in any sense, analogous to the ordinary process of purifying an unwholesome place by disinfectants. Beside, it is well known that to *Agni* (fire) the greatest number of invocations are addressed in the hymns of the *Rig* Veda, and that the idea involved in the ordinary Vedic sacrifice is that the gods are gratified and nourished by the aroma of the burnt-offering.[1] Indeed it would be impossible for a religion based on the Vedas to get on at all without *sacrifices* which seem to be the very essence of the Vedic religion.[2]

The truth, apparently, is that at the formation of the Samaj, when idolatrous rites were proscribed, the *Hom* was retained on account of its Vedic origin, and also, perhaps, as a sort of connecting link with Brahmanism, from which ancestral religion the members of the new Samaj (either through prudence, or from feelings of tender association) could not quite break away. But opponents, both orthodox and heterodox, having taken exception to

[1] Prof. Sir Monier Williams' "Religious Thought and Life in India," p. 12.

[2] On this subject the reader may consult "Cosmology of the Rig Veda," by H. W. Willis, 1887. Williams and Norgate, London.

the *Hom* as being inconsistent with the purely theistic pretensions of the Arya Samaj, it has now become a stumbling-block to the Society. It remains to be seen whether the reasonable objections of opposing sects will make the Samaj abandon a ceremony which is admittedly not of religious significance, or whether it will arouse a spirit of obstinate conservatism, tending to the retention of the *Hom* at all costs.

The anniversary meeting of November, 1882, was the subject of an article in "The Arya Magazine." Here is an extract from it:

"The long, spacious, and lofty hall of the Samaj was tastefully carpeted on the occasion. Silken and laced hangings adorned the windows. Large mirrors in magnificent frames, principles of the Samaj, written in letters of gold, and other mantras from the Vedas in variegated hues, made the room sumptuous with glowing colours. Two grand tables stood east and west of the hall; on one were arranged books for sale, and on the other prizes for girls. Between these two there was another table covered with precious cloth for the lecturer. Bunches of flowers in slender marble vases were arranged on either side of the table, and a highly valuable timekeeper stood in the middle. *Parterres* of flowers of every form and hue were arranged alongside the walls, and beauties of blooming nature were surrounding the hall. In the north a *Hom* (Kund) altar was made which was surrounded by grown-up plantain trees, and a long chain of flowers of different colours encircled them all. Wreaths of flowers entwined with evergreen were adjusted on the borders of each window. The whole hall presented a scene more enchanting than a poet's dream of Eden—a Puranic-man's vision of paradise. It was a rapture merely to sit there and breathe, though every other faculty were suspended.

"The entrance was also as much beautified as the inner hall . . ."[1]

[1] "The Arya Magazine," vol. i. p. 236.

As the above glowing description seems to have been intended seriously, one can only wonder at the writer's unbridled imagination which could transform the whole scene so completely. Possibly for persons whose ordinary surroundings are unlovely in the extreme, the simple and not inappropriate decorations of the meeting-place may have had an exceptional charm; but there can be no excuse whatever for writing of an open court, roofed only by the canopy of heaven, as a "*lofty* hall." The entire description, reproduced above, is instructive as a bit of unblushing exaggeration, and as an example (only too common) of that predilection for brag and utter disregard of strict accuracy which so constantly and disagreeably obtrudes itself upon the attention of the real friends of India. It is proper to add that the Arya Samaj cannot be held responsible for the description which I have criticised above, as "The Arya Magazine," although devoted to the interests of the Samaj is, I understand, a purely private undertaking.

Of the life of Dayanand Saraswati Swami, the founder and acknowledged head of the Arya Samaj, something is known, and that of so interesting a character, that I shall not apologize for introducing it in this place. In the latter part of 1879 Dayanand commenced the publication of his autobiography in the pages of "The Theosophist," [1] from which source most of the particulars respecting his personal history here given have been drawn.

According to the Swami's narrative, he had been carefully instructed in the Vedas, which means that

[1] October, 1879; December, 1879; November, 1880.

he had been made to commit a great portion of them to memory, and had been initiated at an early age into the rites and mysteries of the Seva sect to which his family belonged; but while still a mere boy his mind had revolted against the practices of idolatry. He could not bring himself to acknowledge that the image of Siva seated on his bull, the helpless idol which, as he had himself observed in the watches of the night, allowed the mice to run over it with impunity, ought to be worshipped as the Omnipotent Deity. To quote the autobiography:

"Is it possible, I asked myself, that this semblance of man, the idol of a *personal* god, that I see bestriding his bull before me, and who, according to all religious accounts, walks about, eats, sleeps, and drinks, can hold a trident in his hand, beat upon his dumroo (drum), and pronounce curses upon men, is it possible that he can be the Mahadeva, the Great Deity?"

The sudden death of a sister produced a great impression on the naturally religious temperament of the young man. He resolved to give up the world and to devote himself entirely to a religious life. To marriage he had an extreme aversion, but his parents, believing that domestic life would tend to wean the young enthusiast from his religious mania, were all the more anxious to give him a wife, and made arrangements accordingly. Dayanand, however, now twenty-one years of age, ran away from home to avoid matrimony, and set out upon his wanderings with the object of pursuing, without let or hindrance, the study of metaphysics, a branch of knowledge which he hoped to acquire from the

learned and devout pandits, sannyasis, and yogis, to be found in different parts of India.

After leaving home he got himself admitted into the ascetic order of the Brahmacharees, and was wandering about in the habit of that order, and under a new name, when his father, a respectable man in easy circumstances, who had been constantly in search of his runaway son, at length traced him successfully and came up with him. The Swami relates most naïvely, and with apparent unconsciousness of the ugliness of falsehood and duplicity, that on the sudden and unwelcome appearance of his father, he at once assured the old man, falling at his feet in the most abject manner to appease his wrath, that in leaving home he had acted upon bad advice, that, like a true prodigal son, he was returning home, that his father's arrival at this critical moment was most providential, and that he would willingly accompany his parent back to his native village. The father, however, did not trust his pious son's protestations. He placed Dayanand under surveillance, but the young man managed to elude the vigilance of his guards and effected his escape, to pursue, without further hindrance from his parents (for they appear to have quite lost all trace of him), his wandering life of adventure in quest of knowledge.

Amidst pathless jungles, in busy cities, and amongst the snows of the Himalayas, did Dayanand travel for years with supreme indifference to bodily hardships; conversing and disputing with learned pandits and holy ascetics, ever in earnest search of "the *secret* knowledge, the Vidya, or true erudition of

a genuine Yogi: the Mooktee, which is reached only by the purity of one's soul and *certain attainments*, unattainable without it. Meanwhile, the performance of all the duties of man towards his fellow-men, and the elevation of humanity thereby." Such is the statement of the object of his life which the Swami gave to the inquiring head of a prosperous monastery; but it would be very interesting to learn what Dayanand's idea of duty to his fellow-men really was, and whether his social and moral code recognized the obligations of honest labour instead of vagrancy, and strict honesty in word and deed. "It is the duty of every son to serve his parents with all possible devotion while they are still living"—a precept laid down by Dayanand himself[1]—is in curious contrast with his own conduct towards his parents, and only shows how little theoretical ideas of right and wrong govern men's actions.

From the many interesting anecdotes of adventure included in the autobiography, there are a few well worth reproducing here, as they throw some light upon the character of the man, upon the present state of Hindu education, upon the mental unrest so prevalent amongst earnest thinkers in India, and upon the chaotic state of opinion amongst them.

Once, in his wanderings, Dayanand made the acquaintance of some Raj pandits of great learning, and was invited to dinner by one of them. He went, but what was his horror to find a large company of pandits assembled round a meat dinner, apparently including beef (for he refers to these pandits as

[1] "Theosophist," vol. i. p. 151.

"beef-eating"). Dayanand turned away in disgust from the repast, and hurried from the spot.

In his pursuit of the so-called science of Yog, the enthusiastic ascetic had been studying certain works which treated of the nervous system. He had not succeeded in grasping the descriptions and explanations he had read and pondered over, and began to doubt their correctness. While in this frame of mind, he happened to see a corpse floating down the river, and resolved, there and then, to bring to the test of actual comparison with nature the anatomical science of his books. He entered the river, dragged the corpse out of the water, and "with a large knife" commenced a dissection, which resulted in his satisfying himself that the books were totally and entirely incorrect, whereupon he tore them into pieces, and flung them into the river along with the mutilated corpse. Dayanand does not state what particular points of human anatomy he wished to clear up, and, when one calls to mind the refined methods of modern research, there is something droll about his proceeding to carry out his anatomical investigations "with a large knife." But even such a rude instrument would be quite aid enough to demonstrate the untruth of much that is affirmed regarding the structure of the human body in Hindu books on anatomy. For instance, it is asserted in such works and currently believed by the pandits, that six organs, known as *chakras* or wheels, somewhat resembling the lotus are to be found in the human body, placed one above the other, and joined together by three connecting vessels. These *chakras* have different colours, and from four to sixteen petals

But wild as are these statements they are sober when compared with the still more imaginative declaration that the human body contains a tortoise, a serpent, a goose, and fire. Whatever may have been the origin of these fanciful statements, a native writer in "The Calcutta Review,"[1] assures us that they are now accepted as verities by the Brahmans and, of course, by orthodox Hindus in general. Such being the teachings of Hindu anatomical science, we need be at no loss to understand how readily the Swami could, with the aid of his large knife, satisfy himself that they were utterly false and nothing but impudent fabrications, if, indeed, they were ever intended to be taken literally. At the same time, the fact that Dayanand could handle a corpse, and actually dissect it, proves to what a degree he had emancipated himself from the ordinary, but deep-rooted prejudices of Hinduism. The grand figure of the Mahratta Brahman, angrily and contemptuously consigning to the flowing river the so-called *science* of his ancestors will make an excellent subject for the Hindu painter when, at some future time, art in India, rising above the very narrow conventionalities which have characterized it so long, shall attain a true conception of its scope and limits.

During his wandering life Dayanand, according to his own confession, acquired the habit of using *bhang* to such an extent as to be at times under its intoxicating influence. While in this condition the houseless ascetic sought shelter one rainy night in the veranda of a temple of the bull-god Nandi.

[1] Art. "Physical Errors of Hinduism," by Baboo Bipin Behari Shome, "Calcutta Review," June, 1849.

For him the huge idol which stood there had no sanctity, as he had long enjoyed the full assurance that he himself was Brahma—"a portion of Brahm; Jiv (soul) and Brahm, the deity, being one." So, finding the hollow interior of the god a convenient resting-place, he crept into it, and fell asleep. In the morning a woman came to the idol with her simple offerings of sugar and curds, and, mistaking the Swami for an incarnation of the god himself, begged him to accept her gifts. Dayanand, being hungry, was nothing loath to oblige her, and disposed of the curds and sugar without, as he says, attempting to disabuse her of her false impression with regard to his divinity. He adds, thankfully, that the curds presented by the woman, being sour, served to cure him of the effects of the *bhang*,[1] which he had been indulging in. For how much of his ecstatic visions and self-hallucinations the yogi is indebted to *bhang* it would be profitless to speculate, but that that powerful narcotic contributes largely towards the creation of his wild fancies no reasonable person will doubt.

Dayanand's life is, in some respects, a good example of that led by hundreds, I may say thousands, of men in India, who for various and very opposite reasons adopt the wandering habits of one or other of the ascetic orders. Supported by the voluntary liberality of the people, these restless spirits travel immense distances over the country, carrying with them, to the remotest corners of the land, the ideas fermenting in the minds of the more vigorous leaders of Hindu theological speculation.

[1] "Theosophist," vol. ii. p. 47.

The adventures incident to their vagabond life, unaccompanied as it is by either special danger or peculiar hardship, have charms sufficient for the majority of idle men who take up the calling of yogi or sannyasi. But the more earnest souls amongst them are often driven to despair by discovering the immorality, greed, selfishness, shallowness, and presumption of teachers of great reputation to whose feet they have come for knowledge. Disillusioned, they fall back upon that grand resource of the Hindu for solving the mysteries of the universe—*silent and solitary contemplation.* They retire to some lone place to think out the dark problem of existence, and, if their lives are spared for a few years, acquire, in proportion to their eccentricity and repulsiveness, the reputation of immense sanctity and superhuman wisdom.

Dayanand, however, was made of different stuff. Endowed with a robust frame and commanding stature, a self-reliant nature, a masterful temper, much knowledge of Hindu literature, and great eloquence, the Mahratta Brahman came forward as an aggressive reformer. Eager to establish the correctness of his own views he was ever ready to meet, in open discussion, Hindu pandits, Christian missionaries, or Muhammadan moulvis, and, if his admiring followers are to be believed, quite as willing to convince an adversary with a stick as with a syllogism. It should be added here that, although he did not retire altogether from active life to end his days in the solitude of some lone forest or mountain cave, the reformer, like the great majority of his countrymen, was a firm believer in the importance

and efficacy of Yog, of which I have given some account elsewhere,[1] and actually practised Yog for a season in the desert of Chandi.

After many years of vigorous and energetic missionary work, involving much opposition on the part of the orthodox, the Vedic reformer died at Ajmere on the 30th of October, 1883, at the age of fifty-nine, having, according to the accounts of his followers, been poisoned with arsenic by some of the many enemies whom his religious reforms had raised up against him.* His end is said to have been edifying. His last word, we are told, was, "Shanti" (God's will be done). Of course the great event had its portentous accompaniments. That was inevitable. The sun grew pale when it knew that Swami-ji was wanted back in the celestial mansions, and shed tears which made themselves manifest in that remarkable fore- and after-glow in the morning and evening sky, which, at that time, attracted attention all the world over. The Earth, as soon as she became aware that Dayanand must return home, heaved a deep sigh, which rent her bosom, and resulted in the terrible and destructive outburst of Krakatoa, together with an earthquake in Greece. And when the fatal moment arrived, Aryavarta trembled to the very Himalayas, while a brilliant meteor flashed across the sky towards the northern pole.[2]

Here we have some natural phenomena, which actually occurred, ingeniously connected with the

[1] Supra.

[2] For the above particulars I am indebted to "The Regenerator of Aryavarta," vol. i. No. 45.

death of the Hindu reformer. And let European science offer what explanation it may regarding the phenomena referred to; let it eventually demonstrate the remarkable fore- and after-glow in the skies to be due to aqueous vapour, cosmic dust, or volcanic ashes, as the case may be, the more ignorant followers of Dayanand will, in all probability, ever connect the phenomena in question with the death of their venerated leader. As time goes by the death-scene will, in all likelihood, become, by an addition here and another there, more and more striking and impressive, until, at last, future generations will be asked to to believe that the soul of the Indian prophet returned to God amidst the most awful convulsions of nature.

For years previous to his death the learned Swami was engaged upon a most interesting and important task—a translation into Hindi of both the *Rig* and *Yajur* Vedas.[1] This interpretation of the oldest of Sanskrit books, although not accepted by the orthodox Hindus, would, no doubt, repay translation into English.

What Dayanand has done in his Hindi version of the Vedas is to give a *rationalistic* interpretation of these ancient writings. On the assumption that the Vedas are a direct revelation from the Supreme Being, it follows that they must be correct, and, therefore, cannot possibly conflict with God's other revelation to man, viz., the truths of science, physical and natural. Nothing, therefore, is necessary, but

[1] "Veda-Bhashya, by Swami Dayanand Saraswati. A correct translation of Rig and Yagur Vedas as taught by Rishis in Anti-Mahabharat period, both in Sanskrit and Hindi." Vedic Press, Allahabad.

to put a rationalistic interpretation on the obscure and doubtful passages, and to find a new meaning for such statements or injunctions as seem to conflict with well-established facts and principles. With this method of exegesis and its unhappy results Europe has long been familiar, and the Hindu reformer does not seem to have been more fortunate in its application than Western theologians.

"To him not only was everything contained in the Vedas perfect truth, but he went a step further, and by the most incredible interpretations succeeded in persuading himself and others that everything worth knowing, even the most recent inventions of modern science, were alluded to in the Vedas. Steam-engines, railways, and steam-boats, all were shown to have been known, at least in their germs, to the poets of the Vedas, for Veda, he argued, means divine knowledge, and how could anything have been hid from that?"[1]

Three or four years ago, at one of the anniversary meetings of the Society, a member gravely stated that the Vedas mentioned *pure* fire, and as *pure* fire was nothing but electricity, it was evident the Indians of the Vedic period were acquainted with electricity.

Under the guidance of Dayanand, the Aryas, as far as I can ascertain, profess to find pure monotheistic doctrines in the Vedas, and boldly assert that the different nature-gods of the Vedic Aryans, Agni, Vayu, Indra, are but one and the same god. Now the invocations in the *Rig* Veda are addressed to the dawn, to fire, to winds and storms, to Indra the sender of rain, and so on, but there appears to have been no order of precedence in this hierarchy of

[1] Prof. Max Muller's "Biographical Essays—Dayananda Saraswati," p. 170.

celestials, for the language of the hymns attributes supreme power to the god who may be the special subject of invocation and from whom benefits are being craved. As Professor Max Müller observes:

"When these individual gods are invoked they are not conceived as limited by the power of others as superior or inferior in rank. Each god is to the mind of the suppliant as all the gods. He is felt at the time as a real divinity, as supreme and absolute in spite of the necessary limitation which, to our mind, a plurality of gods must entail on every single god. All the rest disappear from the vision of the poet and he only who is to fulfil their desires stands in full light before the eyes of the worshippers."[1]

Beneath these inconsistencies in the Vedic hymns the modern "Aryas" find a pure *monotheism*, where we would be more inclined to discover *pantheism* if anything. But the incongruities noticed above, if not due merely to exaggeration and flattery, may have arisen from the several gods invoked in the Vedic hymns having been peculiar and special *tribal* gods, before the hymns were brought together to form a *national* collection. In contrast with the denial on the part of the modern "Aryas" that the Vedas, when correctly interpreted, lend any countenance to pantheistic theories, is the fact that the founder of the sect himself believed in *yoga-vidya* which surely cannot be reconciled with monotheism as ordinarily understood. The principles of the new sect are stated as follows by themselves in what they are pleased to call their decalogue.

"1. God is the Fountain of all true knowledge, and the primeval cause of all things knowable.

[1] "Hibbert Lectures," 1878, p. 285.

"II. Worship is alone due to God who is All-truth, All-knowledge, All-beatitude, Boundless, Almighty, Just, Merciful, Un-begotten, Infinite, Unchangeable, without a Beginning, Incomparable, the support and the Lord of all, All-pervading, Omniscient, Imperishable, Immortal, Eternal, Holy, and the Cause of the universe.

"III. The Vedas are the Books of true knowledge, and it is the paramount duty of every Arya to read or hear them read; to teach and preach them to others.

"IV. An Arya should always be ready to accept truth and renounce untruth when discovered.

"V. Truth arrived at after consummate deliberation should be his guiding principle in all actions.

"VI. The primary object of the Samaj is to do good to the world by improving the physical, intellectual, spiritual, moral and social condition of mankind.

"VII. Due love for all and appreciation of Justice, an Arya should manifest in his behaviour towards others.

"VIII. He should endeavour to diffuse knowledge and dispel ignorance.

"IX. He should not be content with his own improvement, but look for it in that of others.

"X. In matters which affect the general social well-being of our race he ought to discard all differences and not allow his individuality to interfere, but in strictly personal matters every one may have his own way."[1]

Notwithstanding their decalogue there is still a good deal of uncertainty and vagueness about the tenets of the Arya Samaj, and no doubt this very vagueness helps at present to swell the ranks of its followers. But there are rocks ahead. Dayanand's mantle has not fallen on the shoulders of any one. No successor was appointed by the master, and it is more than probable that the new sect will soon disintegrate into sections, each with its own special and peculiar views. There are some points, however,

[1] "Arya Magazine," vol. i. p. 3.

regarding which we can speak with tolerable confidence. The members of the Arya Samaj are Hindus inasmuch as they retain and observe those most essential peculiarities of Hinduism, the distinctions of caste and veneration of the cow. They also believe in the transmigration of souls. But they are unorthodox Hindus, inasmuch as they condemn idolatry and reject a large portion of the later scriptures acknowledged as sacred by their co-religionists. They also manifest a strong hostility to the Brahmans; but this, I learn, is more in theory than in practice.

After a long time I was present again, in November, 1886, at a portion of the anniversary celebration of the Arya Samaj. The business extended over two entire days. As on previous occasions the sacrifice known as the *Hom* was duly provided for; also much singing of hymns (partly to the accompaniment of a harmonium), reading of reports and lectures. Of these last one was to be given by a woman. A Hindu woman lecturing in public! This was a real attraction; an opportunity not to be neglected.

The premises of the Samaj I found very much improved, and the place of assembly, although the same, looked very much changed. The area was more restricted, as a part of the open space I had seen before was now built upon, forming a quadrangle, bounded by double-storeyed buildings with picturesque balconies. As on the other occasions, all present, with the exception of myself, were natives. The female lecturer did not give me a chance of writing a description of her charms, for she stood behind a screen, and poured forth, from her place of conceal-

ment, a long discourse in Hindi on women's rights.[1] She began by maintaining the thesis that women were quite as capable of education as men, and, to prove her contention, sent forward a little girl of about six or seven years of age, who recited a long Vedic poem the Mai had taught her. Mai Bhagwati, the lecturer, then proceeded to refer to the admirable manner in which everything in nature was ordered. She drew special attention to the important function of maternity. She told us a story, with the inevitable Rajah in it, to prove or give emphasis to her statement that each one would receive according to his deserts. To the oppression of women in the Zenanas of Hindustan she attributed the subject condition of the country, adding that the blows, ill-treatment, and abuse her countrymen received from the English was the just retribution of their acts in the Zenana. This remark called forth some applause and merriment. Of course Mai Bhagwati's remark was pointed against the unmanly domestic tyranny of her own countrymen, the English being, in her eyes, but the unconscious avengers of the wrongs of the

[1] The *purdah* system amongst Hindus is said to have been adopted during Muhammadan domination. However that may be, the purdah is now looked upon as a mark of gentility, and will not easily be lifted, even by the reforming spirit of the age. One might think that the spread of education will soon release women from their present seclusion, but in some cases it produces the very opposite effect. The cheap education now available in most parts of India raises a great many persons out of their natural humble sphere of life. The wives of such men, who once enjoyed the privilege of moving about freely in their own village, are converted into *purdah nasheens*, the seclusion of the women being an indication of superior rank.

harem. Following up these remarks, our invisible advocate of women's rights said that the husbands who beat and ill-used their wives here would be born again as dogs to be kicked and beaten in their turn that those who ensnared women would be fishes whc would be duly entangled in the meshes of the fisher man's net, and so on, statements which may, foi anything I know to the contrary, rest on Vedic authority, but which were received with incredulous smiles by her male audience.

Later on another lecturer addressed us in Urdu advocating, in a very excellent speech, the claims tc national support of the Anglo-Vedic College proposec to be established in memory of Dayanand, and tc such good purpose did he speak, that at the enc of his discourse a goodly stream of rupees for thc establishment of the college came pouring in. Onc elderly man advanced to the table, and, divesting himself of his gold bangles, presented them as a contribution to the college. He then, with grea deliberation, took off his earrings, one by one, anc handed them over also, together with a small sum o money. His action was received with much popula applause, and he was showered with flowers by thc sympathetic onlookers. Before retiring, he stipulatec that the present he had made should be applied specially towards the building of a room in thc boarding-house of the college to be named after his wife. His example stimulated many others to offe their ornaments, and many a ring and silver *Kurra* was handed up, with the name of the donor, amidst the plaudits of the assembly. But one gift more particularly brought the house down—a subscriptior

of sixteen rupees and two annas from the inmates of the *Christian Mission* boarding-house.*

The influence of the spirit of scientific rationalism which, with the diffusion of European education, has for years past been making itself felt throughout India, rendered inevitable the eventual abandonment, reconstruction, or reform of the ancient creeds of the country. That a new and a rationalistic interpretation of the Vedas could be made by a Brahman unacquainted with any European language shows to what a depth below the surface the modern spirit has permeated. The persistent and organized aggressiveness of Christian Missionary effort has also forced the Hindus, particularly the educated and priestly classes, to reconsider the foundations of their faith, while creating a strong feeling of opposition to their well-meant efforts at evangelization. Between the unanswerable truths of science on the one hand, and the uncompromising attitude of condemnation taken up by the Christian missionaries on the other, the leaders of native thought in India felt that something had to be done, and done quickly. The old strongholds had become untenable, the greater portion of the land was clearly defenceless, so the Arya retiring before the enemy and practically surrendering the whole country has taken refuge behind the bulwarks of a little-known and very ancient fortress in the recesses of the mountain.

Viewed broadly, and without a too close reference to its more or less settled tenets and opinions, the Arya movement is an acknowledgment on the part of a section of the Hindu community of the intellectually

unsustainable character of Hinduism; and it is also a patriotic demonstration against Christianity. In this last respect lies its real influence as a factor in the future of native society, but to me it seems to possess too little vitality to make a successful stand against Brahman and Missionary, although I am assured that the enthusiasm at present for the Arya cause is so great that many men give to the Samaj a month's pay every year and others as much as *half their entire salary*. Others, again, put aside, in a separate vessel, a handful of meal out of every supply taken for their daily food, and sell the accumulated store for the benefit of the Samaj at the end of each month. Widows, who have no further need of their jewels, are frequently known to present them to the Samaj.

To a certain extent the Arya sect is in the first of the many stages through which the Brahmo Samaj has passed. It pins its faith upon the Vedas as did the earlier Brahmos; but there is this difference—the Arya has a new interpretation of the Vedas to go upon. It is the Vedas not as usually understood, *but as interpreted by Dayanand*, that he believes in. But this, on the face of it, is not a very stable foundation upon which to rear a new religion. The men who have become the disciples of Dayanand are, with a very few exceptions perhaps, by no means competent to understand or critically appreciate the soundness, or otherwise, of his interpretation of the Vedas. They have been drawn to him, not from a scholarly conviction of his genuine knowledge, but by the personal influence of the man, and by his offering them a rational and *national*

religion without idolatry. The Arya may think he has found, or may profess to find, in the *Rig* and and *Yajur* Vedas a purer and more reasonable faith than that preached by the Christian or Muslim missionaries, but there is strong ground for believing that as long as he clings to any form of Hinduism he will not be able to free himself from the hereditary priesthood who have guided and ruled the social life of India for so many centuries. Although I have taken much trouble to inquire into the matter, I have not been able to find that a single one of the Aryas has dared to openly set at naught the hereditary customs in which the Brahmans play a part, though an attempt has been made to modify some of the ceremonies. For instance, two young men were invested with the sacred thread at Lahore under the auspices of the Arya Samaj. A Brahman pandit was induced to officiate on the occasion, but all rites of an idolatrous character were omitted. The Brahman's fee for the double investiture and the other necessary expenses came up to fifteen rupees, so that the cost to each of the young men was a moiety of that amount. For a long time the two young men in question were objects of ridicule to their orthodox fellows, who proposed, in derision of the irregular ceremony which had been performed with the countenance of the Arya Samaj, to invest any sweeper with the thread on his paying the now recognized fee of seven rupees and eight annas. No doubt reforms are not to be easily carried out in a conservative society like that of the Hindus. Besides, professions and practice are very different things. It is, I understand, a rule of the Arya

Samaj to abandon the custom of early marriages. Yet a prominent member of the sect, a university graduate, and the minister of a foreign state, broke the rule in the case of his own son.

After a careful consideration of the matter, I am inclined to think that the Arya Samaj is at most destined to form one inconsiderable sect amongst the innumerable sects into which Hinduism is divided. But even as a numerically inconsiderable Hindu sect, the Arya Samaj, composed as it is mostly of men who have received an English education, will probably be an important factor in the regeneration of India. The marked leaning of the society towards physical and natural science is a most hopeful augury of its intellectual future, whilst its open abandonment of idolatry and its public profession of monotheism cannot fail to have a healthy influence on religious opinion in India. And although unable as yet to claim any success worth speaking of in the direction of social reforms, the Society, if true to its present principles, may be calculated upon to throw the weight of its influence in the right side when the favourable moment for energetic action shall have arrived. Latterly the Arya Samaj has manifested a growing tendency to take a share in the political agitation which has of recent years been set on foot in India; a fact which, I think, shows that the Society owes its existence quite as much to national as to religious aspirations.

I have, I regret to say, not been able to obtain any reliable statistics regarding the numbers—not very large I believe—formally enrolled in the Arya Samaj; nor do I know of any special work successfully

carried out by the society with the exception of the Anglo-Vedic School recently established at Lahore with some additional college classes, for the preparation of students for the lower examinations of the Punjab University.

V.

THE LAHORE BRAHMO SAMAJ.

ALTHOUGH not unaware of the existence of the new and very aggressive sect of theists known as Brahmas, or Brahmos, nor unacquainted with their generally-accepted doctrines, I had not visited any of their places of worship when the following public notice attracted my attention:

"The sixteenth anniversary of the Punjab Brahmo Samaj will be celebrated on Sunday, the 9th of November, 1879, at the Brahma Mandir, Anarkalli Lahore. The public are cordially invited to attend on the occasion."

Taking advantage of the Society's invitation to the public generally, I went to their place of worship in time for the morning service.

I found the Brahmo mandir situated in a humble quarter of the town, and devoid of any architectural pretensions whatever. It is a hall about fifty feet long, by eighteen or twenty feet wide, with a veranda in front, partly converted into a little vestry, where Brahmo publications were exposed

for sale. Narrow verandas also shelter the hall on the right and left sides, running along the entire length of the building, which, to suit the climate, is provided with ample means of ventilation.

On the occasion of the anniversary celebration, regarding which I am writing, there were no pictures, statues, or such objects, in the hall. They would have been out of place in the temple of this purely theistic and ostentatiously iconoclastic sect. The occasion was, however, a special one, and some attempt at decoration seemed not only permissible, but called for. Flowers and leaves were innocent enough to be admitted into the precincts of the austere theistic hall, and were used, though not profusely, in giving something of a holiday look to the blank walls of the plain brick building. Between the doorways, on small wooden brackets, were placed glass vases with flowers in them; the doors were ornamented with strings of leaves and flowers. Within the hall, on one side of the entrance doorway, stood an American clock, and on the other a charity-box, labelled in English and, lower down, in Urdu characters.

The floor was carpeted with cotton carpets, known in India as *durrees*. White floor-cloths (not quite clean) were laid for the people to sit upon. A portion of the extreme end of the hall—perhaps a fourth or fifth of the entire room—had been partitioned off by a temporary screen for the accommodation of such women and children as might care to attend. From this extemporized gynecium they could hear, and perhaps see, all that was going on, without being exposed to the rude gaze of the male worshippers.

Yet, when the service was proceeding, some little children, and a few girls of about ten or eleven years of age, well dressed and well bejewelled, more irrepressible or more curious than the rest, came tripping, with tinkling anklets, into the veranda, to have a few furtive looks through the open doors at what was going on within the hall. With the exception of myself all present were natives.

A little in advance of the temporary screen of the gynecium the Brahmo missionary from Bengal took up his position. There was no pulpit or raised platform of any kind for the preacher. The Eastern does not like to stand, and our Brahmo missionary from Bengal was no exception to the general rule, for he sat squat on the floor, the place immediately in front of him being walled in by flower-pots and strewn with flowers. Here he prayed and preached and sang in turns, seated the whole while, and with his eyes shut. The hymns for the day were taken from a small vernacular hymn-book of only a few printed pages. The choir-singers and musicians were the same three Muhammadans I had seen at the Arya Samaj;[1] but the congregation in the Brahmo mandir seemed to take part in the singing to a greater extent than did the congregation at the Arya meeting. Several persons present joined in the hymns, swaying their bodies about gently to the measure. There were prayers, long ones too, in which the congregation took part in a devout manner.

In his prayers the Brahmo missionary asked that Brahma would cause the Hindus, Muhammadans,

[1] Supra p. 98.

and Christians to turn to him and become Brahmos. I could not help thinking that much of the forms of the prayers, or rather the style of the expressions used, were copied, consciously or unconsciously, from the prayer-book of the Church of England.

During his lecture the missionary, to give point to his speech, quoted an episode from the Ramayana about "Seta Dabi" and "Hanooman Sahib," in which the poet says that the monkey-god destroyed a certain city because he could not find the name of God there. At one stage of the proceedings, while a hymn was being sung, two or three men got up and went about placing garlands of flowers round the necks of the people present.

As far as I could judge, the congregation was drawn from the ranks of the well-to-do middle class of the native society of Lahore. The upper classes sent no representatives, nor did the labourers and artizans. Several Bengalis were present. The entire congregation, excluding the women and children behind the curtain, did not, on the sixteenth anniversary of the Punjab Brahmo Samaj, exceed fifty souls, and of these several had been present at, and taken part in, the Arya celebration described in a previous paper—a fact which, I take it, is a fair indication of the absence at that time of narrow sectarian feeling in both movements. At the door I purchased some Brahmo publications, and then left the hall, carrying away with me the impression that the Brahmo theistic church, which originated in Bengal, had certainly not met with much success in the Punjab.

On a subsequent occasion I was present at an interesting ceremony which took place in the Lahore Brahmo mandir. Public notice of the event was given in the following terms:

"We have been [illegible] inform the public that Pandit ——, who is a mi[illegible]e Punjab Brahmo Samaj, has resolved to enter the [illegible]a Ashrama, *i.e.*, to renounce his secular life, on the 20th instant, it being the 32nd anniversary of his birthday. The ceremony of his initiation into the new sphere of life will be performed in the hall of the Brahmo Mandir on that day, at 6.30 p.m. The public are cordially invited to witness the ceremony."

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a good appoint-
ment on a salary of [illegible] and fifty rupees a month. He had deliberately resigned his post in order to lead a religious life and the probable fate of his wife and family was a matter of speculation to many present that evening.

The proceedings, which were throughout conducted with great solemnity, were carried out in accordance with a programme of the evening's work,

copies of which were distributed amongst the audience.

The candidate, with head and face shaved quite smooth, appeared before the audience, well-clad in garments dyed of the orange colour affected by ascetics in India. The presiding minister, a native gentleman of good [illegible] engaged for the most part in the secular work of vernacular education, wore his ordinary dress, but had, in honour of the occasion, thrown an orange-coloured sheet over his shoulders. After the preliminary divine service, the minister gave the candidate a new name, by which he was to be henceforth, and read out various prec[illegible] regard to [illegible]

[illegible] he had just taken [illegible] hasty one, conceived and carried out on the moment, but had been the subject of anxious thought and long deliberation. Years previously he had proposed to abandon the world for the life of a sannyasi, but had been dissuaded from doing so by a most worthy man, himself a sannyasi, who strongly advised him not to act precipitately, but to wait till he felt strong enough to make so great a sacrifice. The time for

action had at length come. In anxious and earnest prayer and communion with the All-father had been passed the night preceding the day on which the final step had been taken. Many conflicting feelings had contended for mastery in the speaker's breast. Sore had been the temptation of the world's emoluments and pleasures. Suggestions of the comfort, enjoyment and consideration to be derived from his regular and not inconsiderable earnings stole into his mind, in seductive whispers, but the thought of what Gautama, the Buddha, had voluntarily renounced—his princely rank, his lovely wife, his child but a day old—brought forcibly before the troubled mind of the doubter that, in his case, the sacrifice would, by comparison, be inconsiderable indeed. That reflection had determined his present action, and as for the future he left that to God. But though now a sannyasi and a beggar in the sight of men, he had no intention of abandoning his faithful wife and his little children: and it would be his care to provide for them in the years that were to come. This last statement was received with prolonged applause by the audience. Turning away from the assembled crowd and facing a screened doorway behind which his wife had, it appears, been placed, he addressed her in pathetic words broken with sobs, and so worked upon the feelings of his auditors that many in the hall that night were deeply affected even to tears.

The step taken by the pandit was of course freely criticized by the orthodox party and by non-Brahmos generally. It was asked, tauntingly, and perhaps not unreasonably, what Brahmos, who professed to have

risen superior to all the puerile rites and ceremonies of ancient Hinduism, had to do with the yellow dress of the sannyasi? And the idea of a *grihasthi* Babu initiating a man into an ascetic order, and conferring upon him the title of *Swami*, was held up to ridicule by the opponents of Brahmoism.

VI.

A BRAHMO WEDDING.

On the 3rd of January, 1884, I received the following invitation, beautifully printed in gold letters on a pink glazed card :

"*God's mercy alone availeth.*

"Lalla * * * *

presents his compliments to J. C. Oman, Esq., Professor of N. Science, and solicits the favour of his kind attendance at the Anarkali Brahmo Mandir on 5th January, 1884, at 6.30 p.m., to witness the nuptials of his daughter * * * with Lalla * * *

"N.B.—Kindly present this card at the door of the Mandir."

At a quarter after six, on the appointed day, I was at the closed door of the mandir, and found it besieged by a crowd eager to get admittance. The Brahmo mandir I have already described, and will only add that, on this occasion, it was illuminated with *cheraghs* in the usual Indian manner. I took my stand outside amongst some native friends and waited. The door was at length opened partially,

and then commenced a long struggle between the masters of ceremonies and the visitors. Probably some of those so anxious to assist at the ceremony had come uninvited and were denied admittance; be this as it may, the door was at very short intervals closed forcibly on all, whether invited guests or otherwise. Meanwhile, a band of native musicians, armed with instruments of European make, amongst which the shrill bagpipes were unmistakable, filled the air with what was looked upon as English music, "Auld Lang Syne," and "Home, sweet home," being at least recognizable in the medley to which we were treated. I pressed forward and stood as close as I could get to the entrance, when a native gentleman beckoned me to follow him, and introduced me into the mandir by a side door. On entering I had the pleasure of meeting and exchanging greetings with the president of the Society and the pandit —now *Swami* — who, as already described, had assumed the garb of an ascetic, and was going to act as priest for the solemnization of the marriage.

I was courteously accommodated with a chair quite close to the raised platform, where the nuptial ceremony was to be performed. When the hall was well filled, and the crowd induced to sit down on the floor as well as they could—a business of no little difficulty, and occupying more than a hour — the Swami took his seat on the dais covered with red cloth, which had been erected against the side wall of the hall, between two doors. At the four corners of the dais plantain trees had been put up, and the entire hall was decorated with strings of flowers.

After a preliminary hymn had been sung by certain hired musicians, the bridegroom, arrayed in scarlet clothes, entered, or rather slid noiselessly in, at one of the doors just beside the dais, and sat down on the right hand of the Swami, while the bride's father, followed by the bride, entered by the other door, and, as unobtrusively as possible, took their places on the left hand of the minister, the father being somewhat in advance and the bride modestly in the background. At the entry of the wedding-party some rose-water was sprinkled about over the assembled guests as they sat huddled together on the floor.

How did the bride look? How was she dressed? How did she behave on this interesting occasion? I regret to have to confess that to these important questions I can give only very unsatisfactory replies. The bride was dressed entirely, from head to foot, in red. The *chudder*, or sheet, which covered her head was drawn completely over her face, so that her countenance was invisible to us all, and her voice, in responding to the minister's interrogations, was quite inaudible, even where I sat. The bridegroom, a good-looking young fellow of about twenty, seemed to be sufficiently self-possessed, and did his part creditably.

The marriage ceremony was very simple. It consisted in the formal declaration by the father, in words dictated by the minister, that he was freely bestowing the hand of his daughter on the bridegroom. The bridegroom was asked whether he would take the young woman to be his wife, and, of course, answered in the affirmative. The bride

was similarly questioned with respect to the young man, and gave a suitable response. The minister then addressed the young couple on the duties and responsibilities of married life, and made each one repeat after him a formula, much resembling that in the prayer-book of the Church of England (and probably adopted from it), which begins with the words, "I take thee, C. D., to be my wedded wife," &c., &c.

When these formal and necessary declarations had been made and obligations accepted, the minister joined the hands of the young couple and tied them together with a string of flowers. At this point the musicians set up an appropriate hymn, and, while the music continued, the young couple sat silently joined together by the floral chain.

The minister then addressed the married couple and the audience at great length. He dwelt upon the many disadvantages and evils of child-marriage, and commended, in glowing terms, the courage of the bride's father, who, in defiance of custom and public opinion, had, from a sense of duty, educated his girl with the care only given in ordinary cases to the education of a boy, and had not sought a husband for her till she had attained the age of *fifteen*, and was sufficiently instructed to take upon herself the responsibilities of a married life. The minister condemned very forcibly the existing Hindu system of child-marriage, which led inevitably to the shipwreck of so many lives, and he exhorted his hearers to come forward manfully and assist, by example, the reform to which so many were ready to give their approval, but which so few were prepared to

carry out in practice. The Swami spoke eloquently in respect to English home-life, as he had heard it described by Indians who had lived in England, and told his hearers that it was far more important for the people of India to learn from the Englishman how to make a quiet, happy home, than to acquire from him skill in any number of mechanical arts or industries, important as these may be to the welfare of the country.

The Swami's speech concluded the proceedings, and the meeting broke up with a distribution of garlands, and amidst showers of flowers.

VII.

TWO VISITS TO THE GOLDEN TEMPLE OF THE SIKHS.

THE word *Sikh* means a disciple, and is the distinguishing name of the followers of a religion, originally founded by Baba Nanak, in the early part of the sixteenth century. At the present time, the Sikhs number about a million and a quarter, nearly ninety per cent. of the whole being residents of the Punjab. They are a warlike sect, who attained predominance in the Punjab during the troubled times which attended the decline and fall of the Mogul Empire in India, and under French officers made a gallant, if unsuccessful, resistance to the British arms in many a well-fought field.

To be seen to advantage, the Golden Temple of the Sikhs should be visited on the occasion of the Diwali festival, when the fane and its surroundings are brilliantly illuminated with thousands upon thousands of those little terra-cotta lamps, known in India as *cheraghs*.

The Diwali festival takes place annually, on the darkest day of the year, according to Hindu

reckoning; and on this day, in 1882, I paid a visit to the temple, accompanied by my wife and children.

Passing through the very narrow and crowded streets of the city, we suddenly entered a large open space, bounded by stately buildings, and there before us lay a fine sheet of water, from the centre of which rose the beautiful Sikh temple with its marble walls and gilded cupolas. A broad walk, for the greater portion paved with marble, runs along the four sides of the great tank in which it stands. A wide causeway of cut stone, also paved with marble, joins the north side of the temple to the land. The lower portion of the building is decorated with the handsome inlaid work so common in India. The dome and cupolas, and the greater part of the upper portion of the building, are covered over with sheet copper, richly gilded; hence the name "Golden Temple" usually applied to it by Europeans. Viewed from the platform on the east side of the artificial lake, or, better still, from an elevated position like the great tower known as the Baba Atal, the temple with its surroundings forms a picture both unique and beautiful. According to Professor Sir Monier Williams, it may be said to rank next to the Taj at Agra as one of the most striking sights in India;[1] while Dr. Fergusson considers this temple as "splendid an example of its class (of nineteenth century temples) as can be found in India;"[2] though he does not commend either its outline or its details. The building, which combines in itself characteristics of both Hindu and Muham-

[1] "Religious Thought and Life in India," p. 175.

[2] "History of Indian and Eastern Architecture," p. 469.

madan styles of architecture, is not imposing in its dimensions; the dome, too, is low and squat; but the material of the building is good, the finish elaborate, and, taken as a whole and in connection with its surroundings, the Golden Temple is a decidedly attractive and pleasing object.

When our little party arrived at the temple, known locally as the *Durbar Sahib*, about an hour before sunset, the scene was extremely picturesque and animated. A stream of human beings was setting steadily towards the central building, and the crowd was every minute getting more and more dense. Looking down from the platform at the base of the new clock-tower, there appeared a troubled sea of white and coloured turbans, filling the entire approach to the temple. We told some policemen, who were there on duty, that we wished to go inside the building. At first they raised difficulties about it, saying that the crowd between us and the Durbar Sahib was too great to admit of our passing forward. Seeing, however, that we had a strong mind to try, they undertook to conduct us to the sanctuary. But certain preliminaries had first to be gone through. We were asked to sit down on a bench and exchange our boots for moccasins made of cloth, as it was not admissible to tread the hallowed precincts of the Durbar Sahib shod with leather. This necessary concession to Sikh customs having been satisfactorily carried out, two tall policemen undertook to clear the way for us—no easy matter at first sight, for we had to get through a closely packed and struggling mass of human beings, which occupied the entire space between us and the door of the shrine.

the policemen, representatives of the irresistible power of the *Sarkar*, brought us safely, and in a very few minutes, to the desired goal. With loud shouts, vigorous pushes to right and left, and, it must be confessed, free use of their official batons on the turbaned heads of their unoffending countrymen, the policemen cleared the way for us, without, as far as I could observe, creating the smallest outward sign of irritation in the men so unceremoniously handled. Possibly the stolid countenances of the Sikhs masked the resentment which such treatment would only too naturally awaken. I tried, but unsucccessfully, to restrain the superabundant energy of our guides and protectors. They were apparently acting according to their ordinary procedure, and smilingly protested that no harm was being done.

When we reached the door of the shrine, it was thronged by a crowd of eager visitors. On the pavement, damp and dirty from the feet of the multitudes that had already been there, devout pilgrims were prostrating themselves with touching humility; whilst others were silently, and very undemonstratively, struggling to enter the holy place, in order to present the offerings, rich or trifling, which they had brought in their hands.

We entered the inner room or sanctuary, a vaulted chamber of very moderate dimensions, with a richly ornamented ceiling. In the centre of it was a heavy canopy, or baldaquin of cloth of gold, supported on four silver posts. Under this was the sacred book of the Sikhs, the *Adi-Granth*, covered over with costly brocade, and before the volume, facing the main entrance, sat the chief priest of the temple.

Round about were several officiating priests. On one side squatted three or four musicians, who, while we stood there, were playing on stringed instruments (*sitars* and *saringhis*), with the accompaniment of the *tabla* or drum, the well-known air of "Taza ba Taza," the ever popular song of Hafiz, breathing of love and wine.

There was no idol nor graven image in the shrine. The only object of veneration was *the Book*. We stood for a few minutes to watch the scene. Thousands had come from distant places to pay their respects and perform their devotions at the temple on this important occasion. They struggled, a few at a time, into the chamber where the sacred volume lay, and made their offerings of money, sweets or flowers; receiving back from the hands of the priest some trifle—perhaps a crushed and broken flower taken from the heaps before him. Observing our presence in the temple, one of the priests came forward and began directing our attention to various points of interest in the architecture of the place. He also handed us a couple of lumps of sugar-candy, and some flowers. I ventured at first to decline these presents; but he pressed them upon us so courteously that we were obliged to accept them. A visit to the upper floor of the building and to the roof, well repaid us for the slight trouble of ascending a well-built staircase. The prospect from the windows was strikingly beautiful and interesting. The bright *water of immortality* (for such it is to the Sikhs) reflecting the image of the Golden Temple, with the surrounding structures, and disturbed only by a few devout bathers near the shrine, lent a

peculiar charm to the view, and tempted us to linger undisturbed for many minutes in the quiet upper storeys of the building. On one side, towards the causeway, the *Akal Bunga*, the stately palace of the *Akalis*, with its gilded dome and towering flag-staffs, made a fine object; on another, the palace of a Sikh Sirdar with its lofty minarets attracted the eye; and a little way off the gigantic tower, surmounted by a gilt cupola, which covers the remains of *Baba Atal*, gave additional beauty to an unusually striking panorama.

The sacred pool itself which lay below us, excavated by Guru Ram Das in 1574, has known many vicissitudes. More than once has it been filled up by the Muhammadans, and in 1762 it was desecrated by Ahmed Shah, who caused slaughtered cows to be thrown into the holy water. But this sacrilege was amply avenged in later years, when "numerous mosques were demolished, and Afghans in chains were made to wash the foundations with the blood of hogs."[1] The temple which now stands in the centre of the quadrangular tank owes its gilding to the piety or superstition of Maharajah Runjeet Singh (A.D. 1780–1839), who, in his day of power, despoiled many of the finest Muhammadan tombs in Lahore and its neighbourhood, to embellish the chief temple of the sect to which he belonged; an act of vandalism not yet forgotten by the Punjab Muslims, to whom the Durbar Sahib is a standing eyesore to this day.

While we were at the temple, preparations for the illumination were being vigorously pushed on.

[1] Cunningham's "History of the Sikhs," p. 103.

The *cheraghs* were being arranged as closely as possible, along all the principal lines of the architecture. On the roof itself, these little lamps were screened on the outer side by a row of thin glass flasks containing water, variously coloured to produce the effect of polychromatic lights, and well indeed, as we afterwards saw, was the desired result secured by this very simple device.

The return through the closely packed crowd was only a repetition of our progress to the temple, and was accomplished without any *contretemps*. Near the clock-tower we found that the authorities (municipal or other) had placed several rows of seats for European spectators of the illumination. Here we settled ourselves down to watch the gradual lighting up of the temple and its surroundings. In an open space just behind us, a band of musicians—the town-band, I suppose—were treating us to popular English airs. As the dusk of evening approached, the appearance in quick succession, on different parts of the temple, around the boundaries of the tank and on the adjacent buildings, of bright points of fire, each point faithfully reproduced in the bosom of the tranquil lake, told us that the cheraghs were being deftly lighted by many practised hands. Silently and rapidly line after line of fire flashed into existence, revealing to our admiring eyes the gemmed outlines of a veritable fairy city. When the buildings had all been lighted up, we were treated to a brilliant display of fireworks on three sides of the tank, the effect of the whole, as a display of light and colour, being most striking and admirable. But, for my part, I would willingly have dispensed with both

sc
English band and the pyrotechnics, for they
ned to me out of keeping with the place and the
casion.

One consequence of the fireworks was to set in
vild confused flight over our heads a host of pigeons,
irds held sacred in so many religious cities, and
ot less sacred at Amritsar, where it would be
langerous for any one to kill a pigeon near the
olden Temple.

Unfortunately illuminations and fireworks are not
ee from smoke. We were soon glad to leave the
avy air in the neighbourhood of the temple, and
ke our way back through the now brilliantly lighted
treets of Amritsar. The Diwali festival, in honour
f which the temple and the city were illuminated, is
nown in Bengal as the Kali Poojah, and in that
rovince is attended with the sacrifice of countless
ictims, particularly sheep, goats, and buffaloes.[1] In
he North-Western Provinces of India and in the
unjab, the Diwali day is that on which the Hindu
radesmen open their account-books for the new
ear and indulge largely in gambling as an omen of
he luck they are to have during the ensuing twelve
nonths. *Lakshmi*, the goddess of fortune, is on this
ight worshipped in the form of a current gold or
ilver coin. The dwelling-houses are all thoroughly
leaned and set in order, if only on this one occasion
n the year, to be fit places for the reception of the
oddess; while the illumination is to keep devils
rom entering the houses under cover of the dark-

[1] "The Hindoos as They Are," by Sahib Chunder Bose, p. 138 *et seq.*

ness.[1] Some say that in rural Punjab the lamps as chiefly lighted in honour of the spirits of depar ancestors.[2]

Be the object what it may, every town in Northern India glitters on Diwali night with thousands upon thousands of twinkling lights, while the Hindu inhabitants perform such rites as they deem likely to bring them good fortune. The Sikhs, although seceders from orthodox Hinduism, are unwilling to lose their chance of the good fortune that Lakshmi may be disposed to give her votaries, so they to illuminate their temple in her honour, and with n niggardly hand.

On Diwali night the Indian bazaars, swept, garnished, and brilliantly illuminated, are crowded with people. The prominent feature of the occasion is the abundance of toys: toys in sugar, in clay, in paper. The toy shops and sweetmeat shops are full to overflowing with houses, towers, and boats, men, elephants, and horses, oxen, fishes, and birds. Indeed the variety of shapes in sugar and in baked clay, gorgeously painted and tinselled over, which compete for public favour, must be quite bewildering to the little ones who, dressed in their holiday finery, crowd round the stalls. Amidst the toys there are many representations of the gods of Hindustan; but nothing having the slightest claim to artistic merit is to be seen anywhere. Some interesting objects may, however, reward the quest of the curious in such matters. For example, an Indian form of the

[1] Sahib Chunder Bose, "The Hindoos as They Are," p. 140.

[2] Mr. Denzil Ibbitson in *The Civil and Military Gazette*, March, 1884.

scientific toy with concealed syphon—known as the *Cup of Tantalus*—may be bought at some of the shops. It is a small basin of burnt clay, in the centre of which is the figure of a man carrying on his shoulders the god Krishna. When water is poured into the cup, it rises to the feet of Krishna and then flows away—commemorating an event in the history of that favourite Hindu deity, who, being carried across the Jumna, was saluted by the river, which rose up in adoration to touch his divine feet and then respectfully retired.

All along the crowded streets, men carrying Chinese lanterns, suspended from light bamboos, tempt the children to spend their money, while others exhibit a large cylindrical paper lantern over the sides of which a number of shadow-figures pass noiselessly in succession. The lantern has within it a light frame set with paper figures, which is made to revolve round the central lamp, hence the shadows. It was a lantern of this kind, long familiar to the East, which suggested that well-known quatrain in Fitzgerald's version of "Omar Khayyam"—

> "We are no other than a moving row
> Of magic shadow-shapes that come and go
> Round with the sun-illumined lantern held
> In midnight by the master of the show."

Second Visit.

As I wished to see the Durbar Sahib on an ordinary occasion, free from the bustle and confusion of a grand festival, I paid it another visit early one September morning. The causeway was occupied by a

crowd of visitors going to and returning from the shrine. In the sanctuary itself a *guru* and several attendants were seated near the Adi-Granth, which, covered over with a handsome cloth, lay on a small stand, a few inches above the floor. It was the object of special adoration, and was being fanned the whole time, as Hindu idols and great chiefs always are on ceremonial or state occasions. So sacred is the Granth held by the Sikhs, that the rich and ignorant amongst them consider it meritorious even to have it read *for* them, from beginning to end, and delegate the duty to a priest, who duly performs it for a trifling consideration—four or five rupees and a suit of clothes. Sometimes this ceremony, known as *pât*, is performed for the benefit of a dead person at the expense of his surviving relatives. Near the Granth in the Golden Temple, four or five musicians were playing on their instruments, and occasionally a song or hymn was set up, filling the vaulted chamber with a loud but not unpleasant sound. The numerous worshippers, mostly women of the middle class, many of them Hindus not properly belonging to the Sikh sect, performed their devotions by peregrinating the corridor which surrounds the central chamber three, five, or seven times, and then laying some small offering before the *book*. As for the chief priest, his duty seemed limited to receiving the offerings and making a trifling return in the shape of a flower or two. The oblations, when they are not of small value, are given in fulfilment of some vow or other. I was shown a richly caparisoned horse which had been presented by a Sikh Rajah, and which was to be maintained at his expense for one year and then

sold for the benefit of the temple. I was assured that the unmeaning and unprofitable service which I have described was carried on without intermission from early morning till late at night by relays of priests and attendants. I had, however, seen a much more interesting religious service in another Sikh place of worship—the *baba ka baree* in Sealkote—where I found a mixed congregation of Sikhs and Hindus listening most attentively to the reading and exposition of the Granth; and I learned, on inquiry, that in an upper room of the Golden Temple the sacred book was similarly expounded every day.

At the Akali Palace I was shown the chamber in which the Adi-Granth of the temple is placed for safe custody at night, and whence it is carried each morning with great state and ceremony to the shrine. On the marble pavement before the palace a Brahman was reading out of and interpreting one of the Hindu shastras, to a small knot of women and children Round the margin of the tank, within the sacred precincts which I was not permitted to tread with shoes on my feet, artizans were manufacturing and selling neat little wooden combs. Others were displaying for sale various articles made of iron, particularly the ornaments worn by Sikhs as distinguishing badges of the sect. Others, again, were laying down marble flags on the broad roadway beside the tank, for the Durbar Sahib is not quite finished yet, leaving ample room for the pious generosity of the followers of Guru Nanak and Govind Singh. Here a physician, with the least possible quantity of clothing on his person, was applying a plaster to the head of a squalling infant; there several persons

were walking round a sacred plum tree planted by some holy personage; while one or two yogis, rubbed over with ashes, sat, seemingly wrapped in contemplation, on the cold pavement. In one place a woman, seated behind a covered volume, was conversing with some members of her own sex. In another a *granthi*, with a similar covered-up book before him, was carrying on a confidential conversation with a middle-aged man, probably a shopkeeper. As I passed I caught the words, "It can be managed," uttered confidently by the possessor of the sacred book. On inquiring about these irregular teachers, male and female, clinging, as it were, to the outskirts of the temple, I learned that they were despicable wretches who, under the garb of religion, lent themselves to the furtherance of the most immoral practices. Seated tranquilly behind the sacred volume of their faith, they arrange illicit meetings, for which I was told the purlieus of the temple afford only too great facilities. Although local circumstances may, in the case of the Golden Temple, favour the exercise of their calling by these shameless wretches, who make a disgraceful profit out of the frailties of others, the class to which they belong probably owes its origin and prosperity to the restrictions imposed upon social intercourse between the sexes in India.

What I saw and learnt during my two visits to the most important of all Sikh places of worship satisfied me that, at the present time, Sikhism, as a distinct religion, possesses little vitality, and that it will, in all probability, be reunited in a generation or two to the Hinduism from which it sprang.

To pave the way for this reunion, the Brahmans, on their part, would, I dare say, willingly recognize Nanak and Govind Singh (the founder and the reorganizer of Sikhism) as incarnations of some god or other, and find good scriptural authority for the worship of the *Granth*, which, it would appear, is already an object of adoration to many Hindus; while the Sikhs, who already bow down to the old divinities of India, would not, in all likelihood, object to the formal admission of their *gurus* and their *Book* into the Hindu Pantheon.

VIII.

THE CENOTAPH OF MAHARAJAH RUNJEET SINGH.

WITHOUT the walls of the city of Lahore, on the border of a vast *maidan* or open plain, and flanked by monuments of historical interest, stands the *Samadh* of Runjeet Singh, the famous Sikh ruler of the Punjab (A.D. 1780–1839). The place itself can boast of no antiquity. It is not half a century old,[1] but yet old enough to carry one back to a state of society very different from the present, and to inhuman customs which have been suppressed by the firm hand of a civilized and civilizing Government. On one side of it is the little garden known as the Hazooree Bagh, the work of Runjeet himself, and the great mosque of Aurangzeb (A.D. 1674). On the other side stands the shrine of the Sikh Guru, Arjun Mal. Facing the tomb is the entrance to the fort and palace of the Mogul Emperors, now guarded by British soldiers.

Viewed from the open space between it and the

[1] Mrs. Hervey saw it in an unfinished state in November, 1850 ("Adventures of a Lady in Tartary, Thibet, China, and Kashmer," vol. i.)

Fort, the building presents a long double-storeyed façade which nearly conceals the cenotaph itself from sight. From a distance the mausoleum, with its domed roof and gilt finials, though not an imposing object, presents to the eye of the spectator a by no means unpleasing illustration of the mixed Hindu and Muhammadan style of architecture. A small central portal fitted with a carved wooden door gives entrance to the Samadh.

The mausoleum, or rather cenotaph, has been erected in honour of a man conspicuous in his day and generation, and both on this account and because of certain interesting details connected with its history and architecture, is not undeserving of attention.

Passing through the small entrance doorway, I entered a long low room or vestibule. It contained a native string-bottomed cot, a rickety old table, a small pile of firewood, and a tin mug, evidently the property of one of the custodians of the place, who would see nothing inappropriate in letting these homely articles of domestic use lie about the very entrance to the Samadh of his venerated chief. Within this room is a staircase, by which I ascended to a large platform on a level with the upper floor of the frontage.

Before entering the Samadh, I noticed an apartment in which the Ashtpujee Debi was enshrined in state. The Brahmans in attendance were very civil, but objected to admit me into the sacred chamber with boots on. I removed mine. Within the chamber there was nothing of any special interest. I was told that the *hom* is burnt twice a year on the open platform before the door of the Debi's chapel,

and the exact spot, blackened by fire, was pointed out to me.

In reply to my inquiries the attendants asserted that the Ashtpujee Debi was the goddess who had given into the hands of Guru Govind the sword of which he taught his people to make such good use, and hence the special place of honour assigned to her in the Samadh.

The central portion of the platform is occupied by the lofty tomb, if it can be called so, of the Sikh king, and the posterior part by a separate building of very subordinate character, which covers the ashes of Runjeet's son Khuruk Singh, and his grandson No Nihal Singh. The elder of these princes, there is good reason to believe, was slowly and deliberately poisoned; while the younger one, by a convenient accident, was crushed to death, by the falling of a portion of an archway on the very day on which the body of his father, Khuruk Singh, was committed to the flames.

The building is a specimen of the mixed Hindu and Muhammadan style of architecture which came generally into fashion in Northern India after the time of the Emperor Akbar.[1] It consists of a lofty central chamber surmounted by a dome with galleries all round. The ceiling is elaborately decorated with convex mirrors arranged in patterns done in stucco. In the middle of the central chamber is a marble canopy about ten feet high, raised on pillars over a platform of marble. Beneath lie, perhaps, some of the ashes of the chief and of several others besides. Upon a small carpet on one side rests a copy of the

[1] Furgusson's "Handbook of Architecture," pp. 116, 117.

"Granth Sahib," with a velvet coverlet over it. The side walls of the arches in the gallery are decorated with fresco paintings representing scenes from Hindu mythology taken chiefly from those inexhaustible sources of Hindu legendary lore, the Mahabharata and Ramayana. But the marble platform under the canopy is the most noteworthy object here. It is surmounted by a large lotus of the conventional pattern, also in marble, having grouped round it thirteen similar but smaller ones of the same material. Of these the big central ornament commemorates the departed king; four of the smaller ones as many wives who performed the rite of sati with their dead lord. Seven others mark the devotion of seven female slaves who also perished with the body of Runjeet Singh; the remaining two marble lotuses stand for a pair of pigeons, who, it is said, voluntarily fluttered down to die in the flames of the funeral pyre of the unscrupulous profligate but successful chief.

It is not fifty years since the eleven women whose ashes rest under those marble slabs perished by fire to do honour to the obsequies of a man without the remotest tincture of chivalry or devotion to the sex, a man whose shameless vices it were needless to speak of, but may be sufficiently indicated by saying that they were those of the most depraved period of the Roman Empire.

Several persons, hereditary custodians of the tomb, and hangers-on generally, followed me about from idle curiosity or the hope of *backsheesh*. Conversing with these, and carefully avoiding the expression of any opinion of my own, I found that they were unanimous in praise of sati, and disapproved of the

suppression of that rite by the British Government. It might have been a half-hearted regret on their part, and a mere captious disapproval of the interference of an alien government, but the feeling, as far as it went, appeared to me to be quite genuine.[1]

One of the custodians of the place explained to me that when a woman performed the rite of sati with the corpse of her husband, her act was so meritorious that it ensured for herself and her dead lord a place in heaven for as many years as there were hairs on her body. And I subsequently learned that the Brahmans, in order to give a precise idea of the period in question, reckon the hairs on the human body at some thirty-five millions.[2] Considered from this point of view, of what æons of bliss has not the Act for the suppression of sati deprived the much married Hindu! When I spoke of the sufferings of the unfortunate women, I was assured that from the moment they ascended the pile they were insensible to all pain, and only rejoiced at their fate amidst the flames that consumed them. As a matter of fact, they were often drugged with opium and bhang.[3]

[1] "The old crime of Sati, whereby Hindu widows were burned alive on the funeral pyres of their husbands, has ceased long ago throughout the British territories. The ideas from which it sprang have no longer any hold upon the minds of the highly educated classes. Possibly the practice would revive among the less educated classes if the British prohibition were withdrawn. The monuments always erected on the spots where the dread rite has been observed are regarded with popular veneration."—Sir R. Temple's "India in 1880," p. 196.

[2] Colebrooke's "Essays," vol. i. p. 135.

[3] "Travels in Kashmir," by G. T. Vigne, vol. i. pp. 82—86, may be consulted for some interesting details regarding satis witnessed by the author.

The reality of sati was never so forcibly brought before my mind as when standing by these memorials of painful suffering. Sati, even to the Anglo-Indian, seems a far-off dimly historical thing like the gladiatorial contests in the Flavian Amphitheatre, but these eloquent stone records of only the last generation bring it nearer to one—obtrude it, as it were, into the very present. Standing here, one can picture the terrible scene as it occurred on thousands of occasions. One can see the bustling eager crowd, the excitement and the hubbub of what was really a holiday. One can hear the remark: "So and so is to be burnt to-day, and his wives will be burnt with him. Let us hasten to the scene, let us secure good places!" One can see the funeral pile erected upon an open space, and the victim, adorned as for a great festival, led three times round the pyre by the officiating Brahmans, in presence of the assembled multitude. One can see the dead man's son apply, with filial piety, the torch to the dry wood, and the devoted woman ascend the already kindled pile.[1] One can see the smoke and blaze, and hear, above the shouts of the excited crowd, the agonized shrieks of the suffering woman in the grasp of the consuming flames. But, indeed, we are not left entirely to imagination, for European travellers, ancient and modern, have witnessed such scenes of horror and

[1] "With this benediction, and uttering the mystic Namo Namah, she (the widow) ascends the flaming pile" (Colebrooke's "Essays," vol. i. p. 135). It would appear, however, that the widow was often placed upon the pyre and even bound down upon it with cords, or regularly and completely thatched in, before the torch was applied to the wood.

have described them. Bernier tells of women whom he had seen forced into the fire by the Brahmans with long sticks, and of others, sometimes mere children, whom he had seen tied down hand and foot upon the pyre ("Voyages," tome ii. pp. 117–119).

On the other hand there cannot be any doubt that in India, as well as in other countries, women have often voluntarily perished after the death of their husbands, animated by heroic devotion,[1] pride of race, religious excitement, or horror of the Hindu widow's miserable, degraded, and abject position.

"One morning on dismissing the regiment from parade," writes Sir George Lawrence, "the havildar major (native adjutant) requested my permission to attend a 'tomasha' (an extraordinary sight). On inquiry it turned out that a suttee was about to take place in the neighbourhood of the cantonment of Neemuch, and I resolved to witness it myself. On reaching the spot I found a large crowd collected around a funeral pyre, on which a poor victim about to immolate herself was seated. Seeing a number of my own troopers in the crowd, I asked them if they would stand by me if I attempted to rescue the woman from her dreadful fate, and finding that they were quite willing, I approached the pyre near enough to address her, saying I was

[1] "Garcilassa says that a dead Ynca's wives volunteered to be killed, and their number was often such that the officers were obliged to interfere, saying that enough had gone at present; and according to Cieza, some of the women, in order that their faithful service might be held in more esteem, finding that there was delay in completing the tomb, would hang themselves up by their own hair, and so kill themselves."—Herbert Spencer's "Principles of Sociology," vol. i. p. 205.

ready to save her life if she desired it. She expressed her gratitude, but refused, saying she was willing to die. Immediately afterwards the flames enveloped her, and in a few seconds she was burnt to ashes. Her calm intrepidity was most astonishing, especially as she had not even the excitement of her husband's body to be consumed with her, only a portion of his clothes, as he himself had died far from his home."[1]

The great missionary Carey describes a sati which he witnessed in 1799. The victim ascended the pile "and danced on it with her hands extended as if in the utmost tranquillity of spirit," in order to show her contempt of death. When she lay down on the wood, she was secured in the usual way with bamboo poles laid across and fastened down, and was then consumed amidst the deafening shouts of the by-standers.[2] The story of one romantic rescue from the pyre, and the sequel, can bear repetition. It is related of Job Charnock, the East India Company's agent in Bengal, and founder of Calcutta, that he

"went one time with his ordinary guard of soldiers to see a young widow act that tragical catastrophe, but he was so smitten with the widow's beauty that he sent his guards to take her by force from her executioners, and conducted her to his own lodgings. They lived lovingly many years and had several children. At length she died, after he had settled in Calcutta, but instead of converting her to Christianity she made him a proselyte to Paganism; and the only part of Christianity that was remarkable in him, was burying her decently. He built a tomb over her, where all his life, after her death, he kept the

[1] "Forty-three years in India," by Sir George Lawrence, p.p. 3-4.

[2] "Life of William Carey," by Dr. George Smith, p.p. 107-109.

anniversary day of her death by sacrificing a cock on her tomb, after the Pagan manner; this was and is the common report, and I have been credibly informed, both by Christians and Pagans, who lived at Calcutta under his agency, that the story was really true matter of fact."[1].

In regard to the sati of the wives of Runjeet Singh we have ample details. After the Ranees—unveiled to the public eye for the first time in their lives, and on foot, but accompanied by their attendants—had distributed their jewels amongst certain of the by-standers, the funeral procession was arranged, and proceeded slowly towards the pyre already erected for the dreadful ceremony. Heading the procession came the corpse of the deceased Maharajah, borne on a bier made in the form of a ship, with sails and flags of cloth of gold, and the costly shawls of Kashmir. Next came the Ranees, habited in simple silk attire, without any ornaments about their persons, carried in open palanquins, offering to the onlookers an example of quiet dignity and heroic self-sacrifice. Immediately behind the Ranees walked seven bare-footed slave-girls, some of them not more than fourteen or fifteen years of age, whom superstition, and perhaps unlawful threats, had driven to sacrifice their young lives in the cruel flames, to add to the pomp of the deceased king's funeral. Arrived at the pyre, the Maharajah's bier was divested of its costly ornaments, which were then given away. The drum kept up a low solemn rumbling. The funeral ceremonies for the dead were performed by Brahmans, as well as by Sikh Gurus, while the Muhammadans,

[1] Captain Hamilton, quoted in Wheeler's "Early Records of British-India," pp. 189, 190.

the rite of d the others in testifying their respect
Indeed, Pro tted Maharajah, broke in frequently
ticular text lah." When the appropriate rites,
of sati was d nearly an hour, were completed, the
Brahmans. espectfully deposited, by the grandees of
"At what the top of the funeral pile, built of dry
general in over with cotton seeds. The Ranees,
know it wa taking precedence according to rank,
Alexander's ladder to the top of the pile, and seated
before the C the head of the corpse. The slave-
Ramayana a nted and took up their position at the
probably hel l body. As they sat there awaiting
uel custom itable doom, "a strong thick mat of
the ought and put over them, and probably
hey had looked their last on earth! To
ombustibility of the mat it was saturated
All the needful preparations being now
he sirdars and attendants descended from
icl was then lighted at the four corners.
nu es eleven human victims perished in
nd flames; but the pyre took two days to
on sumed.[1] From its ashes a few human
elics were carefully and privately
Th se, after being placed in separate
ns, were conveyed in great state to the
e Ganges and committed to the waters of
v r. The remains of Runjeet Singh and
ne es were carried away from Lahore in
in s, with all the pomp and attention the
re accustomed to in their lifetime. The

as not exactly a compulsory ceremony is evident
hat some forty of the Ranees of Runjeet Singh
f whom three were living in 1882.

palanquin which contained the ashes of
had its screens drawn back, while th
closely curtained as though their mod
still shunned the public gaze. Tent
shawls, with poles overlaid with silver
provided for the march, and these, witl
costly presents, were given away to
Brahmans at the place where the re
chief and his consorts were finally en
sacred river.[1] Regarding such remair
girls as the fire may have left, the c
nothing, so we may presume that t
lected as unworthy of any special atte
spot where the sati was performed, r
Samadh of Maharajah Runjeet Singh

For a people who believe in the
of souls, and who practise crematio
monuments such as this can have bu
cance; and indeed in their erection the
followed the fashion of the Muham
imposing and costly tombs formed
feature in the architectural works o
conquerors of India.

The rite of sati was once pract
every part of India on the authority
and injunctions in the sacred books
from the Rig Veda downwards.[2] So
however, maintain that the Vedas d

The above details have been taken from
eye witness, Dr. J. M. Honigberger, who was
Court of Lahore." See his "Thirty-three Y
H. Bailliere, 219, Regent Street, London, 185

[2] Colebroke's "Essays," vol. i. p. 135.

rite of widow-burning, but rather the reverse. Indeed, Professor Max Müller affirms that the particular text of the Rig Veda usually cited in support of sati was deliberately falsified by the unscrupulous Brahmans.[1]

At what precise period the right of sati became general in India, history does not inform us. We know it was practised to some extent at the time of Alexander's invasion of India in the fourth century before the Christian era, and it is alluded to in the Ramayana and Mahabharata.[2] The causes which probably helped to encourage and perpetuate this cruel custom are well and briefly stated by Sir A. C. Lyall in the following words:

"Perhaps the best example of a selfish device obtaining value under the cloak of a necessary rite is afforded by the famous practice of a widow becoming *Sati*, or burning herself alive with her dead husband, which is undoubtedly, as Sir H. Maine has pointed out, connected with the desire to get rid of her right, if she is childless, to a tenancy for life upon her husband's lands. It is also connected, among the great Rajput families, as may be easily observed still in certain parts of India, with the wish of an heir to free himself by this simple Rajput plan from many inconveniences and encumbrances entailed upon him by the bequest of a number of stepmothers, who cannot marry again.[3]

Polygamy may also, as Dr. Marshman believed, have contributed in another way to encourage sati, through the jealousy of the old husbands of young wives, who, clinging to their exclusive possession even in death, would leave instructions with their

[1] Prof. Max Müller's "Selected Essays," vol. i. pp. 333-336. Dr. Rajendra Lala Mitra's, "Indo-Aryans," vol. ii. p. 137.
[3] "Asiatic Studies," by Sir Alfred Lyall, p. 56.

heirs to use every possible means to accomplish the desired sacrifice.[1] But the origin of the custom must be looked for deeper and further back. From the very earliest ages down to our own times it has been the practice amongst many barbarous peoples, who believe in the existence of the soul after death, to kill the wives and favourite slaves of a king, chief, or other person on the occasion of his funeral obsequies, in order that they might attend the deceased and minister to his wants in the shadow-land beyond the grave. The practice is still in full force and carried to terrible excess amongst many African tribes. It was at one time very widely spread, but came in many countries to be gradually replaced by ceremonies derived from the original observances, but not involving loss of life. For instance, the widow would be laid upon the pyre, but removed before the flames actually reached her; or images representing wives and slaves would be consumed with the corpse. There would appear to be some ground for concluding that in the Vedic age in India the practice of widow-burning had gone somewhat out of fashion, though, perhaps, never quite given up, and that modified ceremonies like those to which reference has just been made were coming into favour. The subsequent revival, under Brahmanical influences, of widow-burning, and its continuance to our own day, may be largely due to the causes pointed out by Sir Henry Maine. Of course, the degradation of the widow who chose to survive her husband would be a necessary complement to sati.

[1] Bishop Heber's narrative of a journey through the Upper Provinces of India, 1824-25.

Make the position of the widow intolerable, and sati would be chosen by every high-spirited woman as the lesser of two evils. To the affectionate wife and to the timid soul, the priest offered reunion with the dead and long ages of happiness in the celestial mansions, thereby throwing the halo of religious sanctions over a horrid and revolting custom. Indeed, sati would seem to be a survival of a very ancient rite, fostered and maintained for selfish ends. Unfortunately, the women of India have not only suffered in person by the cruel rite of sati, but have had a slur—no doubt an unmerited one—cast upon them by historians seeking to account for the origin of the hideous custom. Strabo[1] tells us, and several travellers have repeated the same story,[2] that sati was introduced by law in order to put a stop to the widespread crime of husband-poisoning, to which Indian wives who fell in love with young men were said to be particularly given.

I am not aware that any one of the many religious reformers who have appeared from time to time in India, loudly preaching theological doctrines more or less heterodox, made any effort whatever to suppress, or even to discourage, the inhuman rite of sati. It is true the author of the Dabistan (A.D. 1615–1670) observes that—

"The enlightened doctors say that by a woman's becoming suttee is meant that on her husband's decease she should con-

[1] Strabo, bk. xv. chap. 30. The great geographer himself, ubts the existence of the law, and, necessarily, of the reason gned for its enactment.

[2] For instances, see Dr. Norman Chever's "Indian Medical rudence," p. 104.

sume in the fire along with him all her desires, and thus die before the period assigned by nature; as in metaphysical language woman signifies 'passion'; or in other words she is to cast all her passions into the fire; but not throw herself into it along with the deceased, which is far from being praiseworthy."[1]

Probably Muslim influences and feelings opposed to sati were finding expression in the doctrines thus referred to by Moshan Fani; but it remained for foreign rulers, unhampered by unhealthy Brahmanical traditions, to discountenance and eventually abolish the barbarous practice. The Emperor Akbar, we learn from Abu-l-Fazl, appointed inspectors to prevent women being forcibly burnt with their dead husbands and, on one occasion he mounted his horse and rode at full speed to prevent, in person, an unwilling woman being sacrificed on the pyre to the unnatural bigotry of her son.[2] But whatever the Mogul rulers may have done towards mitigating the horrible custom, the credit of abolishing it belongs to the English.

In 1824-25, Bishop Heber, travelling through the Upper Provinces of India, learnt from Dr. Marshman that satis had latterly become more frequent in Bengal, and that the famous missionary attributed this unhappy fact to the increasing luxury of the upper and middle classes, and their expensive imitation of European habits, which often so narrowed their means as to make them anxious to be freed from the necessity of supporting their widowed relations. If the presence of the European in India

[1] "Dabistan," translated by Shea and Troyer, vol. ii. p. 77.

[2] "Akbar-nama of Abu-l-Fazl," Elliot's "Muhammadan Historians of India," by Dowson, vol. vi. pp. 68, 69.

tended, however indirectly, to increase the sacrifice of Hindu widows, it is satisfactory to know that, within five years of the Bishop's tour, vigorous preventive measures were adopted by Lord William Bentinck, who, as Governor-General of India, passed a law in 1829 under which any one who abetted the act of sati would be considered guilty of culpable homicide. The effect of this regulation has been the almost complete suppression of sati throughout the British possessions in India, though it still prevails in the Independent Hill States on the borders of British territory, and occurs occasionally in the countries ruled by feudatory princes. As recently as 1883 a sati was performed at Utarna, in Rajputana, within five miles of a British cantonment, but the abettors of the crime were severely punished by the Jeypore Durbar, probably at the instance of the Governor-General's agent.

A few generations hence, the crime which had been countenanced and encouraged in India for more than twenty centuries will be extinct, and probably as revolting to the feelings of the people as to those of their foreign rulers, affording an apt illustration of the mode in which legislation may contribute to form the manners, the morals, and the character of a people.

IX.

BAZAAR GUP; OR, RUMOURS OF THE MARKET-PLACE.

"When the oak is felled the whole forest echoes with its fall, but a hundred acorns are sown in silence by an unnoticed breeze."—CARLYLE.

THE stories that circulate in the bazaars of India, and find credence amongst the people, are perhaps a fair indication, if not a measure, of the intellectual condition of the masses, and afford, in addition, some idea of the standpoint from which they regard the actions of their foreign rulers. For these reasons I have thought it worth while to note down here a few samples of *bazaar gup* which have come to my knowledge within the last few years.

My grass-cutter came to me one day and begged earnestly that I would get him a pass to cut grass in the Lawrence Park, as he dreaded going into the less frequented parts to obtain grass, since the *Mumiyai Sahib* was going about with his myrmidons.

The *Mumiyai Sahib!* I had never heard of him, and naturally inquired who and what he was, and

why his presence in the neighbourhood should interfere with my getting grass for my horses as usual. My questions elicited the following circumstantial details:—

The European in question, known throughout the country as the Mumiyai Sahib, has a host of agents who go about dressed in black, each armed with a short stick having the peculiar power of causing any person who smells it to follow its possessor, in spite of what friends and neighbours might say to dissuade him from so doing.

Under the spell of this magic wand the unhappy victim follows the Mumiyai Sahib's agent on and on until he is led to some solitary place, usually a distant tope or jungle, far removed from human habitations. Here the miserable man is seized, has a hole bored through the top of his skull, and is then suspended, head downwards, over a caldron of boiling oil, with a roaring fire under it. Into the hot oil the drippings from the victim's brain are allowed to fall and form a most valuable medicine, known as *mumiyai*, and also as *silajit*. This is bad enough, but mark! these proceedings are all carried out *by order of the Sirkar* (Government), as the medicine is much prized by Europeans.

All the servants in my establishment, except a Muhammadan cook somewhat above the average in education, could confirm the above statements, and were able to add some interesting details, as, for instance, that very black people were particularly prized for the manufacture of silajit. One of my informants had actually possessed a little of the precious medicine made out of the brains of black

men. He got it from a servant connected with a state dispensary, and believed that what he received must have been stolen from the Government stock.

Latterly people have become wary of the dangerous men dressed in black; so the wily Sahib now employs women to carry out his nefarious object, who go about with flowers, *missie*, *soorma*, and such-like things, and, under pretence of selling these necessary articles of an Indian toilet, get their innocent victims to smell some of that fatal magic substance which leads to inevitable destruction. My servants were aware of one or two persons who had somewhat suddenly disappeared, and must have been kidnapped by the terrible Mumiyai Sahib, that strange pharmacist, tolerated, if not employed by, the British Government. In fact the fatal snares of this objectional gentleman appeared to them to be the rational and only explanation of the disappearance of the persons referred to. When I pressed my servants to say whether they really believed the Sirkar would authorize, would even allow, such destruction of innocent people, one man promptly observed: "Why not, Huzzoor? the Mumiyai Sahib pays a special tax to the Sirkar for permission to carry on his business," and this seemed to settle the matter conclusively as far as the speaker and his fellow-servants were concerned.

Now it happens that there are such substances known to the Indian druggist as *mumiyai* and *silajit*, black, hard, heavy, bituminous solids (*Asphaltum Persicum* and *Asphaltum silajit*), obtained from Persia or the Himalayas, which enjoy a great reputation for their curative properties, particularly in cases of

one fracture.[1] These rare and unfamiliar substances, brought from foreign parts, command a high price at Lahore, and afford to the ignorant a sufficiently substantial basis for the acceptance of the wild story about the *Mumiyai Sahib*. Desirous of knowing more about this curious popular belief, I inquired of some educated natives whether they had ever heard of it. Oh yes; it had been well known to them for several years. And this, no doubt, was true; for I find from Mr. Cust's "Pictures of Indian Life" (p. 135) that the belief was current during the Sikh campaigns. My educated native friends also told me that it was commonly believed that the stray dogs killed every summer by order of the European authorities were required for the manufacture of a medicine out of their tongues, and that the water about to be supplied by the Lahore municipality was expressly designed to deprive the people of their caste.[2] Accustomed as they have been for centuries

[1] Dr. Honigberger's "Thirty-five Years in the East," vol. ii. pp. 238, 239. The word *mummy* is said to be derived from *mumiyai*, such bituminous substances being employed in the embalming of bodies.

[2] About the time of my inquiries regarding the Mumiyai Sahib, *The Madras Times* contained the following:—

"Some of the ignorant natives have given credence to a report that men of the Lubbay caste are prowling about the streets of the town with the object of kidnapping children, who, it is said, are wanted to be sacrificed in connection with the Harbour works. So firmly is the rumour believed, that every Lubbay is looked upon with suspicion, and some ugly quarrels have taken place. Yesterday morning, in Popham's Broadway, there was quite a commotion on a Lubbay being suspected in the way we have stated. It would appear that while the man was walking along the Broadway he had accidentally touched a little boy, and it being supposed that he wished to get the boy

to government based on narrow selfishness, the mass of the people of India are not yet able to understand or appreciate the principles of British rule. It is vain to endeavour to persuade even the tolerably well-informed that the English authorities are honestly desirous of promoting the public good. They may acquiesce in the statement, but their manner shows too plainly how far they are from believing it. And, after all, this is not to be wondered at, in the face of the haughty and unsympathetic attitude of British officers and of Europeans generally towards the people of the country; for it is certainly hard to believe that men who keep the loaves and fishes to themselves and shrink, almost nervously, from contact with the people, really care very much about their welfare or happiness. Owing no doubt to this want of cordiality between the rulers and the ruled, malicious falsehoods are often circulated by designing persons with the object of making the English government unpopular.

During the summer of 1878, when smallpox was going about Lahore, I was told by one of my domestic servants, not without a touch of suppressed feeling, that the Sirkar had given orders that the

under his power in some sinister manner with a view to kidnap him, a mob of men got together to assault him, and he had to seek shelter in a shop. A similar rumour was spread abroad, and generally believed in among the poorer classes of the natives, when the Madras Pier was in course of construction. It is an idea prevalent among the ignorant masses of the natives that no large work, such as the Pier or the Harbour works, can be carried to completion without the sacrifice of human life; hence the ready credence given to the rumour we have alluded to."

'e women should all be vaccinated, not, as usual, e arm, but *on the breast.*

)t infrequently the Sirkar's name is used to serve ıe purely private end, as the following particulars, ıile throwing light upon other matters, will very clearly show. It appears that when a wedding is to take place in the family of a fairly well-to-do man, there collect to the expected feast, from many miles round, a host of idle and ignorant Brahmans; also a number of bards, who chant the praises of the family; strolling minstrels with dancing girls, and wandering *sannyasies.*[1] All these self-invited guests are feasted by the host, and presented with money and other gifts, at an expense often very disproportionate to his means. To add to the troubles of the bride's family, Muhammadans from the neighbouring villages and low caste people from all sides flock in for *backsheesh.* For the credit of the house the host will do his utmost to gratify these unscrupulous harpies, but it is not always possible to do so. At a village wedding at which my informant—a University graduate—was present, a number of sannyasies presented themselves, and insisted upon having not less than one rupee each. The host declared he could not afford so much as that, but offered to give half a rupee to each man. The offer was indignantly spurned. As the host held out, the sannyasies resorted to their usual tactics. One man beat his forehead with a sharp stone till the blood flowed. In this state he moved about amongst the assembled guests, while his companions commenced chanting a funeral dirge. Such a dirge at a wedding, and the

[1] Men of any caste may join this sect.

disgusting aspect of the bleeding man, effected [illegible] purpose of the unscrupulous sannyasies, and, [illegible] rid of them, their demands were satisfied as q[illegible] as possible by the unwilling host. The evil i[illegible] course, no new one, and it would need a dea[illegible] courage and concerted action to make a successful stand against the impositions of these worthless mendicants. Under the stimulus of Western ideas and feelings, some educated young men at Lahore formed themselves into a society for the purpose of regulating marriage expenses, which at present sometimes plunge a family into hopeless ruin. A tariff was drawn up. The maximum amount to be given to each Brahman was duly fixed, and it was decided that the bards, who on account of their sarcastic tongues are much feared, should receive twice as much as any ordinary Brahman, instead of, as hitherto, four or five times as much; while the strolling minstrels, Muhammadans, and low caste people, were to be sent away empty-handed. The proposed scheme met with favour in many quarters, but fear of the Brahmans restrained a great many persons from openly accepting the proposed rules and scale of rates. To gain their object, the promoters of the scheme gave out that the rules had been framed by *Government*, and that any infringement of them would be punished with a heavy fine, thus deliberately setting afloat one more untrue report regarding the Sirkar and its doings.

Official records and the proceedings of the courts of justice abound in instances of the propagation, for fraudulent purposes, of false rumours regarding orders said to have emanated from the Government. A few

ago a subordinate state official was brought to
ı Assam for circulating a report that Govern-
had directed the preparation of a list of good-
ng and marriageable girls, who were to be given
:wards to the officers and men of a certain force
,aged on the eastern frontier. Of course the
ıcial concerned intended making money out of the
fair, by promising to obtain, for a substantial con-
ideration, an exemption for any fair one whose name
might appear on the list of eligible beauties.

The religious contentions of Hindus and Muhammadans, unfortunately too common, sometimes fill the air with false reports of sedition and disaffection, set on foot by one or other party, with the design of discrediting their opponents in the eyes of the authorities. As might have been expected, such cases have found their way into the law courts, and been sifted to the bottom by Indian magistrates.

Religious and other superstitions are also prolific sources of *bazaar gup*. When Maharajah Dhuleep Singh, sometime King of the Punjab, was about to visit India with the permission of the British Government, all sorts of rumours in connection with his coming were floating about the bazaars of his native country, not the least important of which was that the Maharajah was being sent out to displace the ruler of Kashmir, who was no longer in favour with the paramount power. It is needless to say how disturbing such gossip must have been to both Punjabees and Kashmirees, especially if it be remembered that Dhuleep Singh was the subject of a prophecy contained in the *Sakhee* Book of the Sikhs, to the effect that he would "drive his victorious

elephant through the world," and would "[illegible] emperor over all the kings."[1] I well remembe[illegible] what excited eagerness I was cross-questioned [illegible] the Maharajah and his movements, when I wen[illegible] morning to visit the tomb of the Sikh Guru A[illegible] Singh, hard by the fort of Lahore.

As a matter of fact, Dhuleep Singh, instead being made ruler of Kashmir by the British Gover[illegible] ment, was, on account of certain grave indiscretion on his part, not even allowed to land in India, and at the present time is, in his own words, "England's implacable enemy," somewhere on the continent of Europe, most probably in Russia.

As a relic of the troubled times which preceded the British conquest of India, a belief lingers about the bazaars of Upper India that Delhi is fated to be "looted" every hundred years, Lahore every fifty years, and Multan every thirty years. Regardless of history and chronology, the people are persuaded that the destined period has arrived for all three cities, and the Punjabi mind, I am told, is, or was recently, on the tip-toe of expectation, watching with anxiety for the inevitable bloodshed and disorder.

In war time the *bazaar gup* in an Indian town is especially interesting and significant. At such a time rumours of reverses or disasters are always in the air, are eagerly listened to, and perhaps maliciously kept afloat. Let me give one instance out of any number that might be cited. During the Afghan war of 1878–1880 we had, for a few days, no news of General Roberts and the forces immediately under

[1] "The Sakhee Book," translated by Sirdar Attar Singh, Chief of Bhadour, pp. 35–37.

The bazaar was, as usual on such
ing with the most circumstantial
t was going on at the front. The
had been murdered near Cabul, and
totally destroyed by the tribesmen.
ory that found ready acceptance in
e, while in reality the General was
nd completely successful entry into
al, in company with Yakub Khan.
has dealt with this subject of bazaar
f something like poetical exaggera-
al circumstances of the case by no
his historian says:

ere is a certain description of news, which
one station to another, with a rapidity
the days of the 'lightning post' there was
in the bazaars of the native dealers and
soldiers, especially if the news imported
the British, days before it reached, in
high functionaries of government. We
ess of these evil tidings. The natives of
ive saying that 'it is in the air.' It often
sy feeling—an impression that something
they 'could not discern the shape there-
inds, in obscure anticipation of the news
ards them in all its tangible proportions.
oad, from town to town, from village to
s to whom the feet of those who brought
beautiful and welcome. The British
om his evening ride, was perhaps met
e bazaar by a venerable native on
native respectable of aspect, with white
ments, who salaamed to the English
d, and went on his way freighted with
to the souls of those to whom it was
used with judgment and sent on with

despatch. This was but one of many co
messenger of evil. In whatever shape h
nothing outwardly to distinguish him.
was a sensation in the bazaar, and a vagu
Sepoy lines. But when rumours of disaste
of the chief English officers, they were co
Their own letters were silent on the subjec
to be true, they said, as they had heard no
it was true, and the news had travelled an
whilst the white gentlemen, with bland scep
their heads over the lies of the bazaar." [1]

It seems a pity to pry too c
mysterious system of disseminat
which, some would actually have
carried on by the imaginary mahat
layas "by their own methods," [2] th
mistaken, along strange magnetic
atmosphere; but as the circumstan
Sir John Kaye is often referred to
thing more or less inexplicable,
matter-of-fact explanation of the
obvious, I cannot refrain from paus
consider it here.

In the time of the terrible In
rebellion to which Sir John Kaye
disaster followed disaster, and th
guesses of the bazaar, *always hos*
were unfortunately too often veri
cumstances of the case being cons
surely nothing strange or mysteriou
a rising at any station was pre-
place on a certain date, it was

[1] Kaye's "Sepoy War," vol. i. p
[2] Sinnett's "Occult World," p.

possible for any one in the secret to travel to a distance and declare on the appointed day, and even at the appointed hour, that a mutiny had broken out at such a station, and that the Europeans there had all been massacred; for indeed they had little chance of escape. There was nothing particularly mysterious in all this. If the rumours of the town did not tally with the facts as they were known, the false reports were at once Had the rumours current in Lahore disaster said to have befallen Sir Freder at Cabul, been to any degree borne out b may imagine what an effect the coincid have produced, and how much some peo disposed to make out of it. As it was gave the lie to the rumour, and it at on out of men's minds. Indeed, mendaciou disaster to the British arms have been cu bazaars whenever our forces have been e war beyond our own borders, and Sir Joh himself given several instances of such fa of reverses.[1]

How news is *manufactured* in the E learn from a Muhammadan historian.

"When the besieged were thus reduced," sa Barni, "to extremities, and were suing for pea a month had passed since any couriers had ar Sultan, although the Khan had previously receiv letters every week. This want of intelligence caused some uneasiness in the minds of the officers; they imagined that some of the posts on the road had been destroyed, and that consequently the couriers had been

[1] Kaye's "Sepoy War," vol. i. pp. 35, 266, and 483.

unable to prosecute their journeys with the news. It also caused apprehension and misgivings to spread among the troops, and stories were carried from one to another. Ubaid the poet, and Shaikh Zada-i Dimashki, two evil-disposed and turbulent fellows, who by some means had been introduced to the Khan, fanned the strife, and spread false reports among the soldiers to the effect that the Sultan was dead, that the government had been overthrown, that a new prince now sat upon the throne of Delhi, and that the way was quite closed against all couriers

So every man took his own course. These
n trumped up another false story. They went
Malik Tigin, Malik Mall Afghan, and Malik
the seal, and told these nobles that Ulugh
on them with envy and suspicion, as generals
e reign of Alan-d din, and as obstacles to his
one; that their names were written down in a
disposed of, and that they would be all seized
eaded. These nobles were aware that these
men were constantly about Ulugh Khan, and
their statements. They therefore agreed to
joining together their followers they left the
this defection a panic fell upon the army,
ult arose, and no man thought of another.
ery opportune for the besieged Hindus, and
ey sallied forth and plundered the baggage of
Ulugh Khan, with his immediate followers,
ogir. The soldiers were worn out, and fell in
As they retreated, couriers arrived from the
ews of the health and safety of the Sultan."[1]

cessary to remark that the rumour set
e conspirators might have turned out to
ndeed it did in the following case:

mperor was on this campaign against Khan-
thor's father remained at Agra, in the per-

[1] From the "Tarikh-i Feroz Shahi" of Zian-d din Barni. Elliot's "Muhammadan Historians of India," vol. iii. pp. 231, 232.

formance of his duty to the Emperor, and the author himself was at Agra with him. Every day turbulent and designing men spread disastrous news. One day I said to one of my companions, 'Suppose we set some favourable reports afloat;' and he asked what we should say, and I replied, 'Let us say that news has come that they are bringing in the heads of Khán Zaman and Bahádur Khan.' I told this story to several persons. Three days afterwards, Abdullah, son of Murad Beg, brought in the heads of Khán Zaman and Bahádur Khan. The rumour was started in Agra on the very day they were slain."

There are some; I am quite aware, who regard the rumours of disaster which fill the bazaars in time of war as indications of the hostile feelings of the people towards their foreign rulers. I myself attach no such importance to the matter. The vast majority of the people know nothing and care nothing about political or military matters. The picture sometimes drawn of the two hundred and fifty millions of our Indian fellow-subjects, or even of the forty millions of Indian Muhammadans, watching the political horizon with keen and intelligent interest, is superlatively ridiculous. During that critical period, the early part of 1885, I often asked English-speaking natives about the news, and found that they were as ignorant and indifferent about it as if they had been dwellers in the Fiji Islands. The totally uneducated are, if possible, even more indifferent. The gossip in war time comes from the camp and camp-followers, and the rumours of disaster are circulated in the towns by a few malicious persons. Sometimes the *bazaar gup* originates with dishonest speculators, who hope to profit by a panic; but is perhaps more frequently

set afloat by wags and foolish fellows who wish to get up a little excitement. At the same time it is not to be denied that there are in the English press itself elements sufficient to unsettle the minds of the Indian people. For how is it possible that the masses of the large towns in India should learn with indifference, through the distorting medium of the vernacular press, the complaints constantly made in England, for party purposes, of the naval and military weakness of the country, of the utterly unprotected state of the British Isles, and of the vast superiority of foreign nations in men and weapons?

I have, perhaps, said enough in this paper to indicate the nature of the rumours which, originating in various ways and circulated for various purposes, float about the Indian bazaars in ordinary times as well as on special occasions. That such false rumours, however baseless and absurd, might at a critical moment be productive of grave consequences to the state, no one will question. There is, however, but one remedy—*education*. Much has already been done by schools, colleges, and universities, but a great deal yet remains to be done to enlighten the masses—not the country folks only, but the urban populations as well.

X.

AT THE PLAY: THE NEW INDIAN THEATRE.

THERE is perhaps less difference between London and Lahore than there is between a play like "Pleasure," at Drury Lane, and one like "Indur Sabbha" on a Hindu stage in Anarkali.

The performances, interesting from many points of view, which I am about to describe, took place in mere temporary sheds, simply because there were no permanent theatres or better accommodation for such theatrical representations existing in the capital of the Punjab, or, as far as I know, anywhere in Northern India. At Calcutta, I understand, the Bengalees have got two or three theatres of their own, but I regret to say I have as yet had no opportunity of visiting them. However, I have before me a copy of a play-bill of one of the Bengalee theatres, which may be found interesting to the reader. Its moral tone is not the least remarkable part of this play-bill, which I reproduce below exactly as it appeared in a Lahore newspaper. There are, unfortunately, some obvious misprints in it, but I have not ventured to make any alterations.

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, 28TH AND 29TH MAY.

NATIONAL THEATRE, 6, BEADON STREET.,

Saturday the 28th May, 1881.

At 9 P.M. will be repeated with necessary improvements and additional grandeur, that new and original historical drama by Babu Grish Chunder Ghosh

ANUNDO ROHO, OR AKBAR.

This new drama is no stale story told in dull monotonous dialogue, nor is the work crammed with tremendous tiring octavo speeches and soliloquies. The greatest statesman and mightiest monarch Akbar is portrayed with a truely histrionic pen.

The dying speech of Rana Pratap will bring tears from every human eye!

The scene where Akbar suffers from the effects of poison, falling a victim to his own malicious machinations, that monarch of monarchs whose single breath could one day change the fortune of this vast Indian Empire suffering all the untold tortures of hell in his secluded pavilion in the centre of a tank, and now so poor as so console his burning soul or pour a drop of water on his scalded tongue, this awfully grand scene we say will have an impression in the mind of the spectators never to be effaced, and impart a lesson illustrative of the Truth, that the crooked path of *policy* is always perilous!

BETAL.—A quite original and strictly national character, sublime and magnanimous, will be played by Babu Grish Chunder Ghosh.

Soul dissolving songs—where religion and love are harmoniously blended together—will even for the instant inspire confidence and love for Good in the heart of the most ungodly!

SCENES.—As for our scenic grandeur, we need only say "Come and see!"

NEXT DAY, SUNDAY, AT 6 P.M., THAT SPARKLING MELODRAMA,

MAGIC STATUE.

All the local papers have spoken very highly of this piece, both as a practical production and stage play.

☞ *Please note.*— This is that well received play in the *finale*, of which marble statues are transformed into living beauties.

G. C. GHOSH,

Manager.

On the 3rd of March, 1883, I went, accompanied by a friend, to witness the performance of "Aladdin, or the Wonderful Lamp," in the temporary theatre erected not far from the Mayo Hospital at Lahore, by a Parsee dramatic company. The theatre was a huge shed, very dimly lighted by a single chandelier of only four lamps, suspended in the centre of the room, and a couple of wall-lamps with reflectors fixed against side-posts. These six lamps, with the row of foot-lights on the stage, constituted the entire lighting arrangements of the theatre, and, as might be readily imagined, every part of this big shed, with the exception of the stage, was in semi-darkness. When my friend and I arrived, about twenty minutes before the time appointed for the commencement of the play, the place was already thronged with an audience representing all ranks of the native community except the highest. There were also present, occupying for the most part the front rows, a small number of Europeans and Eurasians of the lower classes, including a sprinkling of respectable representatives of the gentler sex, some of them in demi-toilette and evidently dressed for the occasion.

The stage, as we soon had an opportunity of learning, was got up after the European model, and was provided with an abundance of trap-doors and lifts, so necessary for the sudden appearance and disappearance of the genii who figure in the story of Aladdin.

The piece was performed in the Urdu language, and the whole of it, with trifling exceptions, was sung to the accompaniment of a *sarungee* and a drum. I had not been prepared for this musical performance, and found it rather more difficult to follow the

words as they reached us not a little disguised by their passage through the nasal organs of the performers.

The troupe consisted of ten Parsee men and one young European woman, whom a strange fate had brought into association with this roving company of men of an entirely alien race and creed.

The curtain rose to discover a black, thickly bearded, well-featured man standing at a small table, with alembics and crucibles in the background, engaged in some magic rites. In his hand he held an hour-glass. This was the famous magician of the story. After consulting the hour-glass attentively once or twice, he fired a pistol below the table, and immediately up rose a fairy, from whom, after a short colloquy, he received a ring. The fairy then vanished as suddenly as she had appeared. Rubbing the ring and again discharging the pistol brought up, this time, the venerable king of the genii, from whom the magician learned particulars as to how possession of the wonderful lamp might be secured.

During these proceedings, there lay unnoticed a dark figure prostrate on the floor. A kick from the magician brought the sleeper to his feet in apparent confusion, and introduced to the audience a dumb half-witted Abyssinian slave, who henceforward played a part, more or less irrelevant and absurd, in every succeeding scene.

This character has, as far as I remember, no warrant whatever in the "Arabian Nights." It is apparently introduced as a concession to the rules of the modern Indian theatre, which, "like the ancient, has its *bidushaka* or privileged buffoon, the companion of

the king; who generally unites great shrewdness and mother-wit with love of creature comforts." [1]

The next was a street scene.[2] Aladdin and a number of youths were playing at ball, and quarrelling and fighting over their game, when Aladdin's old mother came upon them, and not without some little trouble got her wayward, petulant boy away from the others, advising him to give up childish frivolities, and to learn wisdom at last. The acting in this scene, of both mother and son, was good, that of the old lady particularly so, and gave me a favourable opinion of the histrionic talent of at least some members of the troupe.

As scene after scene of the well-known story, which has delighted many successive generations of young people in the West as well as in the East, was presented to us, as "old lamps for new" was being cried in the streets of Bagdad, as the wily magician gradually got Aladdin into his toils, as the genii came and went in obedience to the possessor of the lamp, I felt somehow that this story, so entirely in keeping with the genius of the East, enacted thus in an Eastern tongue, before an Oriental audience, and with appropriate natural surroundings, lost much of its improbability, and seemed to be a presentment of what might have actually happened. In fact I was for the moment under the spell, as it were, of the mystic genius of Asia.

[1] "The Modern Hindu Drama," by Babu Kissory Chand Mitra, *Calcutta Review*, vol. lvii.

[2] To appreciate the fact of the use of scenery in these popular representations, it should be remembered that as Professor Wilson says, writing on the Indian theatre, the Hindus probably never knew what scenes were, and substituted curtains for them.

As I mentioned before, there was but one woman in the troupe, and she a European. Women never appear now on the regular stage in India, and only, as far as I know, take part in the *panchaly* performances in the Bengal zenanas. Nor need we be surprised at this, when we recollect that it was not until the Restoration that females appeared on the boards of an English theatre. But I should add that, according to Professor H. H. Wilson, female characters were generally represented on the old Hindu stage by females, although it was not uncommon for men or lads to personate females in certain cases. No native women were, as far as I could see, present at the performance of Aladdin; not even *hetæræ*, who, it is certain, frequented the Greek theatre, from which respectable females were excluded.

Very different from Aladdin, and performed by an entirely different company, was the play I now proceed to describe, a very popular modern drama, "Indur Sabha," composed, it is said, by a Mussulman poet, by command of Wajid Ali Shah, ex-king of Oudh.

The theatre was a huge framework of bamboos, badly put together and covered with thin sheeting. The stage was good enough, and was lighted by some fifteen lamps with reflectors. There were no other lamps in the big enclosure, but a tropical moon shining through the ceiling-cloth gave a subdued light which was far from disagreeable. The reserved seats consisted of a double row of chairs, the first class of a similar double row a little further back; then came a barrier, and behind it a rude arrangement of seats for the bulk of the

spectators. The charges for seats varied from three rupees to four annas each, and there was a special place reserved, at eight annas a seat, for "native females"; but I did not see any there, or anywhere else in the theatre. The performance was advertised to commence at nine. At about two minutes to that hour, I took my seat in what appeared an almost empty house. A quarter of an hour went by; I ventured to inquire of an attendant connected with the theatre when the performance commenced. "At nine," he said, but added significantly, "You see they don't come till late"—referring, as I understood, to the audience. "And so you wait for them?" I observed. "Yes," he replied, "we *must* wait for them." Twenty minutes past nine, the half-past nine gun, and no sign of business nor the slightest indication of impatience on the part of the audience, which had now increased considerably. This, at any rate, gave me time to study my company. In the first row of all, and just before me, was a young Eurasian woman in a yellow satin dress, evidently got up for the "opera"; a portly companion in a serviceable stuff dress chaperoned her; a little boy about twelve years of age and a native girl, perhaps a trifle younger, dressed in a *saree* of flaring red, completed the party. The little girl took her seat quite naturally with her beautiful big eyes riveted, in mute wonder, on the glories of the drop-screen, when she was rudely awakened from her fairy dreams by one of the attendants, who told her to go further back and not to sit with the *sahibs*. Very reluctantly the little girl, whose "first opera" this evidently was, retired, without withdrawing her eyes

from the stage where evidently she expected something wonderful to take place. A quarter to ten—tinkle! tinkle! tinkle! and up goes the screen to reveal to a delighted audience a sort of fairy palace-garden, where, on a comfortable sofa, lay a sleeping prince, Goolfam of Hind. Bang! and behold a fairy all in green, and glittering with tinsel, floats down from the upper air on cords, alas! too visible. The prince does not awake, and Subz Peri—for that is her name—hovers round him enamoured of his beauty. In song and dance (the slow voluptuous measure peculiar to the East) she gives expression to her tender feelings, to the accompaniment of an unseen orchestra of stringed instruments and *tablas*.

The next scene reveals the court of Indur. Seated on his throne, with courtiers and attendants about him, appears the King of Heaven, against a striking background of forked lightning, stars and suns, with the most impossible of mountain ranges that scene-painter ever put on canvas. Stiff, uncomfortable, and very much bored looked poor Indur—"one of the principal deities of heaven" according to the playbill—as he sat in state upon his tinselled throne, and it did not surprise me when he ordered a demon attendant to summon a heavenly *nautch-girl* to amuse him. Immediately there appeared, from a trap-door, a *peri* all in gauze and glittering tinsel, with enough clothing on to satisfy the most prudish taste, decked with jewellery of various sorts, amongst which tinkling anklets and wristlets were not omitted; but there were no shoes on her feet. She danced, or rather glided, with clinking anklets,

before the king to a sort of slow measure, never lifting her feet more than half an inch off the floor, swaying her body about gently and moving her uplifted arms in a graceful manner. Nothing in the world could be more in contrast than the dress, the movements, and the manner of this *bayadère* and those of a jumping ballet-dancer in silk tights on ' boards of a European theatre, which contrast will be lessened by the fact that the graceful peri after all a man, who figures in the playbill as aster Homi." The audience highly appreciated peri's performance, and the King of Heaven was so well pleased that he wanted more entertain- t of the same kind, and had three other peris succession dancing before him, the last of e being the too susceptible Subz Peri, who on way to the court had seen Goolfam asleep in the n. Dreary and puerile appeared to me the ·ected scene, as peri after peri, introduced by doors from below, came forward and sang and ..ed to please the King of Heaven. To my untutored ear, the measure and the music seemed always the same, and the sentiments, as far as I could understand them, not very novel. But tastes differ, and the audience, I am bound to say, viewed the performance with very different eyes from mine, and were highly pleased with it.

The glories of Indur's reception-hall gave place to a small room, in which the poor green peri, madly in love with Goolfam, persuades a demon of the court to bring the prince to her. Hardly has the demon consented to carry out her wishes, when lo! suspended in mid-air, appears the couch of the still

slumbering Goolfam. The demon awakes him, and then conceals himself. The mystified and astonished prince, lost in wonder at his new surroundings, feels, as one would feel quite naturally in the East, that he is in the toils of some magician. The green peri appears and attempts to reassure him, offering him her love in the most forward, unblushing, and disagreeable style,[1] but the prince cannot recom himself to his new situation, looks regretfull wards his native Hind, and repulses her with disdain. Learning, however, that the peri c from Indur's court, he is carried away by a d to see the wonders of the celestial kingdom, promises to return the peri's affection if she only take him there. But to introduce a m amongst the celestials was a serious business, with the gravest difficulties, and Subz Peri pr her inability to gratify his whim. To gain his the prince hints that far from being a f Indur's heaven, his admirer must be at bes the mistress of some wretched demon; an ins tion which Subz Peri resents by giving him a sma box on the ear. In vain the peri declares that no human being could gain admittance to Indur's court; Goolfam is obdurate, and in the end Green-peri—poor enamoured peri—yields to his importunities, and conceals him in a place from which he can view the glittering spectacle he so longed to see.

[1] This is not an uncommon feature of the plays which delight a modern Indian audience. Women in love are frequently represented as pursuing the object of their passion in the most unblushing manner, notwithstanding the rudest rebuffs. See the story of Puran Bhagat, at the end of this paper.

Here in the midst of the usual enjoyments, the singing and dancing of the celestial *nautch-girls*, a demon attendant smells the human intruder and drags him before the king. All is now apparent to an indignantly virtuous court. The wanton peri, with wings clipped, is banished, and the Prince of Hind sentenced to pass his life in a solitary cave. In the last act everything is put right. The fame of the beauty and power of song of a certain wandering female devotee reaches King Indur, and he requests her presence at his court. She comes, and charms the god with both her person and her voice. To reward her, Indur offers her one costly gift after another, but she declines them all. He then offers to give her whatever she might ask for. "Give me Goolfam," says the happy *yognee*, who is, of course, no other than Subz Peri, and the Prince of Hind is duly restored to her loving arms.

Of the two plays I have just described, "Aladdin," though Oriental in its genius and surroundings, and with a large element of the supernatural in it, was acted by men who had, I fancy, formed their style upon European models, and who accordingly introduced a good deal of vivacity and human interest into the piece. The acting and singing in "Indur Sabha" was dull and stately, without animation, action, or expression; but, as I have already said, unquestionably suited the taste of the audience. The music was at times decidedly pleasant even to my ears, all untrained in the mysteries of Eastern harmony. The representation closed with a melody which is certainly not without a beauty of its own, and fairly carried the audience away.

Somehow the court of Indur, when the lifted curtain disclosed to our view the Olympians sitting in solemn state, reminded me forcibly of the final result of the *Katputlee ka tamasha*, an Indian performance of marionettes not unfamiliar to most Anglo-Indian children, which mainly consists in a lot of tinselled Rajahs coming out and taking their seats, in solemn state, on a row of tinselled thrones. As each high and mighty Rajah floats into the reception-hall, suspended by a fine wire which *ought* to be invisible, the manager announces the many grand-sounding titles which it is his happy privilege to possess, and the pompous grandee slowly subsides into his seat. The attendant musicians play vigorously on their *tablahs*, and another slow and solemn chief of world-wide fame enters; and so on, till at last the entire row of seats is occupied by the gaudy dolls, whose appearance, as they sit in state on their tiny thrones, is as ridiculous as their titles.

One more account of an Indian theatrical representation, and I have done. This time the play was acted at the expense of a successful tradesman, who hoped to acquire some religious merit by having a moral drama produced for the benefit of his fellow-townsmen. Admission being free, the audience was by no means select; but it was as orderly and well-behaved as the best-bred audience could have been. There was a stage for the actors; but there were no seats for the audience, who contentedly squatted down on a terrace floor before the stage, under the open canopy of a lovely starlit heaven—and a more suitable *auditorium* could not be imagined for a sultry night of an Indian summer.

The play selected, known as "Prahlad," is a good sample of highly popular Indian dramas. I went to the performance at half-past nine and left at midnight, when the play was only half over. The first scene opened with a potter's oven. A few homely and very familiar articles of Indian pottery, *chiraghs* and *chillums*, were about to be baked under the superintendence of a woman, who was dressed very much better than women of her station in life usually are. In the potter's oven a cat had placed four of her kittens, and Prahlad (the king's son), who happened to come that way, observing them, told the woman that she should remove the helpless creatures or they would be burnt to death. "If it is the will of god (Rama) that they should live, they will be safe enough in the oven!" said the woman. "Rama!" replied the lad; "why, my father is greater than he,[1] and my father himself could not save them alive in the blazing furnace." "Let us see," was the answer. For four days the fire was allowed to glow, but, strange to say, the kittens were none the worse for it. Prahlad, upon this, became a devoted and fanatical follower of Rama, who he confessed was a greater being than his father the king. His devotion to the worship of Rama roused the indignation of his mother, who, curiously enough, made him over to a Brahman schoolmaster to be taught better ways. Nothing,

[1] Prahlad's boast was not without some good foundation, as his father, "Hiranya-Kasipu, in his wars with the gods, had wrested the sovereignty of heaven from Indra, and dwelt there in luxury" (Professor Dowson's "Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology").

however, could shake his reverence for Rama, whose name was always on his lips.

The scene in the Brahman's school, brought on the stage before us, was intended to be a humorous one. The boys cuffed one another behind the master's back, made faces at the pedagogue when he could not see them, and so on. Prahlad himself took no great part in the pranks and horseplay of the other boys, but frequently exclaimed "Rama! Rama!" for which unseasonable interruption the master would give him a taste of the cane. He was, however, incorrigible. Tired out by his refractory pupil, the Brahman went to the king, who took the boy in hand himself, and, after trying argument and pursuasion in vain, ordered him to be put to death. The pious young prince, the devoted adorer of Rama, was taken out to be hanged—was, in fact, actually hanged before us, but the rope broke; he was thrown from a hill, but not hurt; he was struck by the executioner's sword, but remained unharmed. Enraged beyond endurance, the father drew his own mighty sabre upon his obstinate son. At this critical moment the ground opened, and Rama (Vishnu), in the form of a formidable tiger, appearing upon the scene, tore the impious king to pieces. Could anything in the world be more religious, more tedious, and more utterly Indian?

As for the acting in this very serious and moral piece, it was enough to make one laugh outright; though the audience, to judge from their almost reverent attention, seemed very much impressed by it. In the opening scene, when the dialogue took place between the prince and the potter's wife, the

speaker always stood near the left-hand corner of the stage, behind which the prompter was concealed. The prince, about to take up the dialogue, would step slowly to the left-hand corner and the potter's wife would go, as slowly, to the right hand corner of the stage. After he had said his say, they would change places, slowly and majestically, and the woman would repeat what the prompter told her from behind the curtain. Although this ridiculous interchange of places went on for ever so long, not a soul amongst the audience appeared in the least degree amused by it.

As my object in this short paper has been to give an idea, however inadequate and imperfect, of the popular modern Indian drama, at least in the Punjab, I make no apology for reproducing here the argument of the favourite opera, "Puran Bhagat," as given in the play-bills, since it will perhaps afford some insight into the conditions of Eastern life and the taste of the people in regard to the subjects best suited for dramatic representation.

The play-bill says, in regard to the opera, "Puran Bhagat"—

"This piece, which is in the mouth of every one in the Province, is expressly translated with some alterations from a Punjabi domestic true story. It gives an example of the proverbial saying 'Murder will out,' and the author has no doubt intended to intimate that though secrecy may veil the deed of the murderer for a time, 'Providence,' that suffers not a sparrow to fall to the ground unnoticed, will by some means or other both expose and punish the evil-doer. The triumph of virtue over vice is also represented in an affecting manner.

"ARGUMENT OF THE OPERA.

"In Sealkote (Punjab) there was a King called Saliwan who

had a Queen by name Lona (daughter of a cobbler), she was both accomplished and fair, but equally cruel and incontinent. The King had no issue by her.

"He had a son called Puran by his first Queen. The King was very fond of Lona, having never loved his first Queen since espousing her. One day the King ordered his son Puran to visit his stepmother. The Prince wished to obey the command of his royal father, but was advised by his mother to avoid Queen Lona, as she was a woman of an intriguing nature. However, he obeyed his father's orders, and was received in a very kind manner. Queen Lona fell in love with him, and there and then declared her passion. Puran refused her proposal with disdain; she, disappointed and thwarted in her desires, accused Puran of dishonourable conduct and of attempts against her honour and constancy. King Saliwan entering the palace finds his wife in a sorrowful mood, and believing her words to be true, orders Puran to be kept in close confinement. Lona, mad with love, again wishes to persuade Puran, and after obtaining permission from the King, visits him in prison on a pretence to advise him to desist from such immoral conduct, and instead of advising urges him again to satisfy her passion. The Prince refuses, and she on seeing the King and Puran's mother eavesdropping, pretends her love to Puran as that of a mother, but Puran was still bad and wanted to love her as a mistress; the King gets incensed beyond measure, orders the poor Prince to be thrown into a well. The Queen mother tries to get him pardoned, but the King gets angry with her also, and turns her out to the jungles.

"Some hermits discover Puran in the well; relieve him from his confinement; he joins them as a Faqueer. Puran enters a city as a Dervish and asks charity in a house, where the owner is a beautiful orphan lady called Soondra, she pities him and falls in love, and urges Puran to accept her proposal. He advises her to abstain from such a bad passion. She supplicates. At this time Puran's Saint enters, and advises Puran to desist from this world's pleasures. She in disappointment goes after Puran in the disguise of a Nun.

"One night King Saliwan dreams, and sees Puran's Saint revealing to him the intrigues of Lona and Puran's innocence. The Saint by his power, as a punishment makes him blind,

nd as the only cure to his malady, recommends the King to vash his hands in Lona's blood.

"On one hand the Queen mother, and on the other hand ioondra, wandering encounter each other in a jungle, where fter mutual explanations they recognize each other in disguise. ut here we must digress a little.

"The King having now become aware of his folly, intends of evenge and to bring an end Lona's life. At this juncture Puran enters, and requests his father to pardon her. The Saint presses him to end her life, but at the urgent solicitation of Puran, Lona is forgiven. Lona apologizes sincerely for her crime. The Saint promises the King to cure him, sends Puran in search of his mother, who after surmounting vast difficulties finds them in a jungle, and a happy meeting takes place. The disconsolate King is relieved from all pains, unites Puran with Soondra, and the curtain falls to the strains of a pleasant song."

XI.

THE MOST SACRED SPOT ON EARTH; OR, BUDDH GAYA AND BUDDHISM.

If it were possible to ascertain, by any means, what particular spot on earth is the most sacred in the opinion of mankind, there is every reason to think that the majority of votes would be given in favour of Buddh Gaya.

Leaving the busy town of Bankipore one afternoon in April, I travelled some fifty-seven miles to Gaya, by the branch railway, over a level uninteresting looking country, unredeemed in its drear monotony except by picturesque groups of slender palm trees, which always and everywhere lend grace and beauty to the landscape they adorn.

I arrived at Gaya after dark. It was quite an early hour; but the town, with its population of 76,000 souls, was already beginning to retire to rest. The atmosphere was oppressive, and the dimly lighted streets, which were being turned into dormitories for the night, presented anything but agreeable pictures. Here and there a perspiring half-clad *hulwai;* who had not yielded to the early closing

movement, squatted listlessly in his "fly swarmed sweetmeat shop" behind a few trays of uninviting confectionary; or a drowsy *bunneah*, with his knees drawn up to his chin, dozed over his uncovered heaps of rice, *dall*, *atah*, and *ghee*. These half-awake shopmen were apparently the principal, if not the only, representatives of trade in Gaya at that hour. *Charpoys* in scores were already occupying the main thoroughfare in very unpicturesque disorder. On some of these rickety beds, unprovided with mattresses or pillows, the owners were stretched full-length; on others, two or three almost naked men sat silently fanning t[illegible] with little palm-leaf [illegible] of their *dhoties*. Wh[illegible] thoughts, as they sat t[illegible] hot and dusty street of [illegible] thinking, as so many [illegible] thought before them, th[illegible] living? or were they p[illegible] tion on the merits and [illegible] ment which Sir Richar[illegible] two hundred and fifty [illegible] perform every day?[1] N[illegible]

[1] "It is difficult to summar[illegible] fifty millions of people are [illegible] every day. But probably th[illegible] to this, that they are by the [illegible] under foreign rule; that they a[illegible] people than their rulers; tha[illegible] grandeur of tradition, an a[illegible] European nation has nothing to compare; that, despite their union, socially and morally, they cannot hold together politically, &c."—*Fortnightly Review*, January, 1883.

thoughts, I can only say that my own mind was occupied with a sort of vague anxiety as to whether I should be able to get accommodation for the night in the Government bungalow for travellers, as Buddh Gaya did not contain a single hotel.

Fortunately I found a vacant room in the travellers' bungalow; where I passed a most uncomfortable night under the punkah. The furniture of the room consisted of the usual table, a couple of chairs, and a bed; but there were two photographs of the great Buddh Gaya temple on the wall at the foot of my bed, which attracted my attention and somehow mingled in a most fantastic and [illegible]le manner

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ugliness, a spectacle so disagreeable in every way as not to be easily forgotten. The return through the same streets some hours later was more pleasant. Glorious sunlight gilded the mean huts and dirty alleys of the town—what would the East be without its sunshine?—the people were astir, all more or less clothed according to Indian fashions, which depend but little either upon modiste or tailor.

The town of Gaya is situated near some low, barren, but not unpicturesque hills, and is associated with the ever-memorable life and work of the founder of the Buddhist religion; it is also a famous place of Hindu pilgrimage. An extravagant Hindu legend connects the little hills of Gaya with the history of a giant no less than 576 miles high, who by the power derived from the performance of austerities became, as usual, a terror to the gods. Taking a mean advantage of the giant's piety, the wily divinities, with Brahma at their head, induced him to allow his sinless body to be used as the altar for a great sacrifice. This prostrate position gave them the opportunity they sought. Upon his huge head they placed a sacred stone, and literally sat upon it; while Vishnu belaboured the poor giant with his terrible mace until he became motionless. In his extremity the blameless monster, thus overreached by the unscrupulous gods, merely asked, as a favour, that the place where he lay—or rather I should say where his head lay—should ever afterwards be associated with his name, Gaya, and that on this spot "should abide for the good of mankind all the sacred pools on the earth, where persons by bathing and offering of oblations of water and funeral cakes may

obtain high merit for themselves, and translate their ancestors, blessed with all that is desirable, and salvation, to the region of Brahma." [1] This foolish and unedifying legend is, we are told by Dr. Rajendra Lala Mitra, implicitly believed by the people; but the learned gentleman himself sees in it an allegorical reference to the overthrow, by artifice and force, of the religion of Buddha by the Brahmanical priesthood. Any way, the far-sighted and never-to-be-conquered Brahmans have in this case, as in many another one, succeeded in appropriating to their own glory and profit places held sacred by heretical seceders from the fold of Hinduism, and Gaya is now a favourite place of Hindu pilgrimage, where hundreds of thousands flock annually to the Vishnupada Temple, to prostrate themselves before the footprints of the god and to perform the funeral ceremonies of their dead relations.[2] This temple, surmounted by a dome and gilded pinnacle, stands on one of the ridges. The Temple of the Sun, with its sacred tank, occupies the low ground within the town.

The principal object of my visit was, however, Buddh Gaya, where five hundred years before the birth of Christ the immortal founder of the Buddhist religion had obtained "enlightenment"—a spot considered the most sacred place on this earth of ours by perhaps a fourth of the entire human race. Even in this matter-of-fact age, which is supposed

[1] "Buddh Gaya," by Dr. Rajendra Lala Mitra, pp. 10–17.

[2] "The birth of that man is the occasion of satisfaction to his progenitors, who performs, at the due time, their obsequial rites at Gaya."—Prof. H. H. Wilson's translation of the "Vishnu Purana," book iii. chap. 16.

to have eyes and ears only for utilities, one may be pardoned for leaving the direct road to Calcutta in order to visit a spot round which so many memories cluster.

My way lay along a dusty road through open fields, and for some distance alongside the dry sandy bed of the river Phalgu. The country through which I passed presented this April morning a very different appearance, no doubt, from what it wears during the brief winter which succeeds the rainy season in India. Under the mild winter sky, man and beast, field and forest, seem to revive a little, and the European tourist flits through the verdant country, charmed with the mild sunshine of these favoured climes. And if he writes a book of his travels, its pages reflect the charming blue sky and the soft, mild climate he has been enjoying. In April it is otherwise, as the resident in India knows only too well. As I proceeded on my way, a carved stone here and another there on the roadside, or built into a mud hut, served to indicate my approach to Buddh Gaya and its ancient temple.

A drive of about six miles from the Government Dak Bungalow brought me to a large group of buildings enclosed within a high masonry wall, which the driver of my cab seemed to think must be the object of my visit. It was a Hindu monastery, well situated in a garden on the riverside. I went in through the wide-open gateway, accompanied by my coachman. On the terraced roof of a building of some three or four storeys, the Mahant or Abbot—Maharaj they styled him—was taking his ease, and after being informed by my loquacious coachman,

who knew nothing whatever about me, that I was a visitor from Calcutta, directed his servants to show me over the place. Later on he expressed a wish to make my acquaintance. He asked many inquisitive questions about myself and about the object of my visit, and showed me with much pride a copy of Dr. Mitra's book on Buddh Gaya, which had been presented to him by the Government of Bengal He could not read English, and seemed to care little for the Buddhist temple, but he could appreciate the compliment paid him by the British authorities, and I dare say found pleasure in the big picture-book they had given him, which was in all probability the only illustrated volume in his possession.

The monastery over which this abbot presides was, according to Dr. Mitra, originally established in the early part of the last century by a mendicant of the order of Giri. A successor appropriated the then neglected Buddhist temple, which became a source of large income to him from the gifts of *Hindu* pilgrims to the sacred Bo-tree. In the course of time the society acquired considerable property, and Hindu temples sprang up in the neighbourhood.

A very short walk from the Hindu monastery brought me to the ancient temple I had come to see, the hoary relic of many fleeting centuries. As it stood there before me it looked quite *new*, and I must confess that a feeling of disappointment took possession of me as I contemplated the "restored" edifice, with the fresh stucco mouldings and Portland cement additions of the Department of Public Works. In my disappointment I could not help thinking that the renovated temple might, perhaps,

bear as much resemblance to the original temple erected on the spot as the Buddhism of some recent European writers to the doctrines of Sâkya Muni.

In the belief of three hundred millions of Buddhists, the site occupied by this temple is the identical one on which, seated in the shade of a spreading Bo-tree, Gautama—known also as Prince Siddârtha and Sâkya Muni—attained "enlightenment" some five hundred years before the Christian era; and although so remote in time, the event referred to still makes itself unmistakably felt, across the long intervening centuries, in the life and thought of many nations.

Three hundred years later, the Buddhist king Asoka erected a *vehara* here for the accommodation of Buddhist monks, which was replaced by a temple perhaps as far back as the first century B.C., when image-worship would appear to have already become a recognized feature of Buddhism. In A.D. 637 the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsiang visited this temple, and his description of it shows that the building which attracts the modern traveller is substantially the same as that erected some eighteen or nineteen hundred years ago. There is evidence to show that, having fallen into decay, it was repaired by the Burmese in the early years of the fourteenth century. Notwithstanding partial attention and repairs, the corroding breath of five hundred years again reduced the old building to a ruinous condition, when, in 1876, the Burmese came once more to the rescue of the dilapidated temple. Upon this the Government of Bengal, actuated by a proper regard for the venerable old-world monument which the vicissitudes

of fortune had brought within its jurisdiction, resolved to have it carefully examined and thoroughly repaired. The result of this determination was before me; a sort of revised, abbreviated, and amended edition of the original temple of Buddh Gaya prepared by order of Government.

Defaced by time and the hand of man, transformed a good deal through well-meant restorations, the celebrated temple at Buddh Gaya, even in its modern disguised condition, with its nineteenth century stucco about it and its brand-new gilt finial, is an imposing structure about one hundred and seventy feet high and fifty feet wide at its base. All things considered, it has certainly lasted remarkably well, the material of which it is constructed being only well-burnt brick cemented with mud. Stone has been used only in the door-frames and flooring. The building is plastered with lime-mortar. It is built in the form of a pyramid of nine storeys, embellished on the outer side with niches and mouldings. Facing the rising sun is the entrance doorway, and above it, at an elevation greater than the roof of the porch which once adorned the temple, there is a triangular opening to admit the morning glory to fall upon the image in the sanctuary.

Around the base of this ancient structure the *débris* of centuries had entirely covered, to a depth of nearly twenty feet, a host of interesting shrines and memorials which the recent excavations carried out by the Government have brought to light—votive *Stupas*,[1] images of Buddha in different attitudes, and

[1] "Models or miniatures of tumuli and graves varying in size, at Buddh Gaya, from three inches to about three feet, the

a substantial and ornamented stone railing as old as the time of Asoka. Within the shadow of the great temple many modern buildings are also to be seen—Hindu temples and the burial-place of the Hindu abbots of the neighbouring monastery;[1] while monuments seen by the early Chinese pilgrims have entirely disappeared. And where is the Bo-tree? Gone, like the olives of Gethsemane, centuries ago, with many a successor fabled to be a lineal descendant of that original Bo-tree whose trembling leaves were, in Buddhist belief, witnesses of the greatest events in the history of the world. A raised platform attached to the temple now supports a young and vigorous Peepul-tree (*Ficus religiosa*), a sort of sentimental representative of the Bo-tree of the sixth century before Christ, which in its day stood over the miraculous diamond throne, a structure as old as the world itself, nearly a hundred feet in circumference, and reaching down to the bottom of the earth. An attendant mentioned to me, not without a trace of dissatisfaction in his tone and manner, that the young tree before me was not even a descendant of its predecessor on the same spot, which had attained a great age, but had perished, he said, from ill-usage during the excavations. Its wood, he assured me, had for the most part been taken by the King of Burmah for the fashioning of images of the sage. Professor Sir Monier Williams,

oldest being hemispherical, like a water-bubble."—Dr. Rajendra Lala Mitra's "Buddh Gaya."

[1] "The dead bodies of the monks, unlike those of other Hindus, are buried. . . . The body is buried in a sitting posture."—Idem, p. 4.

who visited the place, was told that the tree had been destroyed by the excessive devotion of Buddhist pilgrims, who watered its roots with Eau de Cologne.

However stately may be the venerable fane which has for so many centuries adorned Buddh Gaya, its real claims upon the attention of the traveller are due to the site on which it is built. On that spot near the old Narainjana of the Buddhist writers, and by those low, dreary hills, Gautama successfully defied the terrors and resisted the temptations of the Evil One. Here he attained *Buddha-hood*, and from this spot he went forth to proclaim to the world that the way of deliverance from death was found.

For such as may be interested in the history or doctrines of Buddhism, an ample literature, gathered from many lands and translated from many different ancient and modern languages of Central and Eastern Asia, is now available—thanks to the researches and labours of the many learned Orientalists who have toiled in this fruitful field. Possibly, however, for the majority of even well-informed persons, the only source of Buddhist lore has been Sir Edwin Arnold's beautiful and charming poem, "The Light of Asia," which embodies in a refined, Europeanized form, but with glowing Oriental imagery and rich local-colouring, such an outline of the Buddhistic legend as cannot but be acceptable to every lover of the beautiful in language or sentiment. But it must be confessed, however reluctantly, that the Prince Siddârtha with whose person, life, and thoughts we have of late grown familiar, is, for the most part, a creation of European literature and scholarship.

The legend, as preserved in various countries, though not in identical forms, relates that Buddha had no earthly father; but in the fulness of time descended of his own accord from the celestial regions to help the world, and was born on earth as the son of Mya, the wife of Suddhodana, king of Kapelavastu. The universe thrilled with joy to its very core at these auspicious events, and signs and wonders in heaven and earth attended the conception and birth of this saviour of mankind, who, on entering the world, stepped boldly forward, proclaiming in a loud voice that he was the chief of the world, and that this was his last birth. When a few days after he was presented at the temple, the Hindu gods did obeisance to him. After this it will not surprise any one to learn that, while still a mere infant, being on one occasion left alone in the shade of a tree, he was found there some hours later sitting cross-legged in the posture appropriate to deep meditation, and that the shadow of the tree which protected him from the sun had kept its position over him, while the shadows of the other trees had moved, as usual, with the altered position of the sun in the heavens. To such a very precocious and favoured child no earthly teachers could well impart knowledge, and those appointed his tutors had naturally to own their immense inferiority to their young pupil in all the arts and sciences. In his home at Kapelavastu (in the modern district of Goruckpore), within view of the mighty Himalayas, the boy grew up thoughtful and religious, caring so little for martial pursuits as to call forth the taunts of his fellow nobles. But when

put to the test he easily surpassed all competitors, performing the most wonderful and startling feats of daring and strength. After the birth of his first son, Gautama resolved upon what has been called "the great renunciation," and abandoning his life of pleasure, went forth alone, at the fated hour, from his father's capital, to discover in the usual Indian way, by solitary contemplation, a remedy for the miseries of existence. Before and since the great renunciation of Gautama men have gone out into the wilderness in quest of peace or in search of knowledge. Before and since Gautama's time nobles like St. Bernardo have, in a fit of piety, given up the pomps and vanities of a brilliant and luxurious world of chivalry and fashion for the solitude of the caves, and round them too the chronicler and poet have woven their glittering curtain of legend and romance. Such an event as the great renunciation afforded ample materials for a highly dramatic treatment, and good use has been made of the situation by the Eastern poets. Even to this day millions of hearts melt with tender pity as they recall the scene in which the prince takes a last fond look at his lovely wife sleeping with her infant on her arm,[1] and steals through the lordly chambers of his sumptuous palace away into the silent moonlight, to find out in poverty and solitude a way of deliverance for mankind. But the deliverance of mankind was an object by no means acceptable to *Mara*, the Evil One, who,

[1] Years afterwards Buddha revisited his native city and had a most affecting interview with his wife, whose conjugal love, equal to any sacrifice, led her to become one of the first of the Buddhist nuns.

appearing in the sky, urged Gautama to give up his mission and accept universal sovereignty instead. Unmoved by the glittering offer of temporal power, the prince, burdened with the sorrow of the world, and with the thirst of the wilderness upon him, pursued his way from Kapelavastu to the little hills near Rajagriha, and there studied Hindu philosophy with the Brahman hermits in the caves. Having learnt what these wise men had to teach, he removed with five disciples to the neighbourhood of the place where the temple of Buddh Gaya now stands. What events occurred here; why this particular spot is regarded by a fourth part of the human race as the most sacred place on earth, we learn from the Lalita Vistara, a work which is supposed to date from the third century before Christ, and which I shall follow in the next few pages.[1]

In accordance with the requirements of Hindu religious opinion in such matters, Gautama now resolved to carry out a six years' penance or mortification of the flesh. Selecting a suitable place, he sat there cross-legged for the appointed period, exposed, through summer and winter, to sun, wind and rain, practising the severest penances and self-mortifications, in which fasting and suspension of the breath are especially mentioned, till he was reduced almost to the verge of death. A scarcely

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living skeleton,[1] naked and covered with dirt, the sage, who looked like a churchyard ghost, was, we are told in the Lalita Vistara, an object of contempt even to the ignorant villagers of Uruvilva, who came to gather leaves and sticks about the place in which he had established himself. But the gods were watching the ascetic with intense interest, and fearing he would die, his mother, now Maya-Devi, descended from heaven in great distress, attended by troupes of *Apsaras*. The hermit reassured her, however, and after covering him with flowers from the Elysian groves, she gracefully retired to the sound of divine music. During his long penance the Gods, the Nagas, the Asouras, and the other heavenly hosts, waited upon Gautama night and day, and offered sacrifices to him; while, on the other hand, the wicked demons lost no opportunity of whispering doubts and discouragements into his ear, and making tempting suggestions in regard to easier and pleasanter ways of attaining virtue and its rewards.

His painful austerities were at length successfully accomplished, but, reduced to a condition of great enfeeblement, he felt that he could not thus reach the goal of his endeavours. He resolved, therefore, to abandon all further self-mortifications, and did so, to the great astonishment and disgust of his five companions, who thereupon left him and went away.

It would, to say the least, be both tedious and

[1] An interesting little piece of sculpture from the Yusufzai district, now in the British Museum (case No. 5), represents the emaciated and repulsive form of Gautama after his arduous penance of six years on the banks of the Narainjana.

unprofitable to reproduce, with all the miraculous and trivial details in which the Lalita Vistara abounds, the story of the subsequent events in the hermit's life at Gaya; so I shall, in the interests of the reader, condense the exuberant narrative into the briefest epitome possible.

Watched over by admiring gods, Gautama bathed himself in the river Narainjana, put on new clothes, and partook of food prepared for him by a village maiden from the milk of a thousand cows. Vigour and beauty returned to him, and he proceeded to the *tree of knowledge*. His course was a grand triumphal procession, in which Gods, Upsaras, Nagas, and other beings in thousands and millions took part. Flowers rained down from heaven, perfumed breezes sported over the favoured land; jewelled pavilions, costly banners, cool tanks of limpid water appeared along the way, while divine music filled the delighted air. Gautama, whose tread shook the startled world, took his seat on some tender grass under the Bo-tree, and commenced his meditations. A brilliant light issued from his body, and attracted a countless host of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, who came to do him homage. When these had retired, Gautama shot forth from between his eyebrows a terrible flame, which warned Mara, the Evil One, of his approaching triumph. This challenge, for such it was intended to be, aroused the angry passions of the demon king, and he resolved to attack Gautama beneath the Bo-tree.

Legions of hideous demons, some headless, some with as many as a hundred thousand heads, capable of assuming at will monstrous, terrible, and dis-

gusting shapes, hurried to the Bo-tree. Armed with all sorts of deadly weapons, their hands and feet entwined with venomous serpents, their ugly features still more deformed by passion, their eyes red and flaming, their misshapen mouths bristling with enormous teeth and spitting forth flames and venom, the host of Mara, howling savagely, amidst a terrible war of elements, surged around Gautama on that eventful night.[1] But the demons could not daunt or even disturb the sage, against whom their weapons were powerless; their very missiles discharged against him being changed to flowers. The Evil One, foiled and disappointed, essayed to compass Gautama's defeat by other means. Instead of the deformed and terrible monsters who had threatened his personal safety, there now appeared before him, near the Bo-tree, forms of voluptuous and entrancing beauty, female forms of different ages from girlhood to ripe maturity, who endeavoured to attract his attention by the witchery of their charms. Some exposed their rounded busts and shapely forms while pretending to adjust their garments, others coquettishly veiled their beauties under diaphanous draperies. Some artful ones tried the power of flattery. Some bolder than the rest drew attention to their own charms of person, and invited the sage to share with them the delights of love. Two and thirty modes of seduction were tried by these lovely syrens, but tried in vain. All their soft wooing, all their lascivious blandishments, all their winsome

[1] The reader will hardly fail to recall to mind, and to contrast with this, Milton's description of the temptation in the wilderness.

beauty and subtle arts of love, were powerless against Gautama, who had conquered and was superior to all sensuous passions, all carnal desires and weaknesses, and met their advances with a homily on the evils to which the passions give birth.

The author of the Lalita Vistara lingers over the details of the voluptuous scene, which affords ample opportunities for poetical and artistic treatment. Human nature changes little, and while I write this, "The Temptation of St. Anthony," by a French artist, representing the father of Western monachism surrounded by a bevy of attractive girls in the costume of Eve before the fall, is being exhibited to admiring hundreds in a London show-room.

After the discomfiture of the fair temptresses, the demons made one more furious attack upon Gautama, and tried to overwhelm him with, amongst other things, red-hot globes of fire of the size of Mount Meru; but the Sage had only to strike the ground with his hand to prostrate his enemies in helpless ruin.

A curious fresco painting from the caves of Ajanta, reproduced in Dr. Mitra's "Buddh Gaya," is supposed to represent Mara's assault on Gautama under the Bo-tree. In the centre of the picture is the colossal and conventional figure of Buddha in contemplation, seated cross-legged on a raised throne. The demons, armed with swords and other weapons, crowd about him with threatening gestures. Some of them, in a rather childish way, are making grimaces at him. One monster, with a stupid face, is pulling down his lower eyelids with his fingers in

order to display the whites of his eyes; another is stretching his own mouth, as naughty boys sometimes do, with his two forefingers, and glaring at the sage with fiendish eyes. At each side of the throne, and leaning on it, stands an exuberantly developed, bejewelled woman, while four other languishing and characterless beauties of the same type occupy, in a listless and objectless manner, the foreground of the picture in front of and below the throne. Apparently the artist has endeavoured to combine in this one picture the twofold trial to which Gautama is said to have been exposed; but the grotesque arrangement of figures he has produced, though not wanting in some good touches, fails entirely to do justice to the poet's conception of either ordeal in the wilderness at Gaya.

From his conflicts with the powers of evil, Gautama eventually arose with the assurance of complete enlightenment and knowledge of the way of deliverance from the ills of existence. He was now a *Buddha*. All nature thrilled with intense rapture at the glad event, and to this day the large long-stalked leaves of the peepul trees everywhere quiver with excitement at the recollection of the scenes which were witnessed under the Bo-tree at Gaya. All former Buddhas rejoiced exceedingly, and hosts of heavenly beings hastened to pay their respects to the new Buddha. Without the aid of gods or men, Gautama had, by persistent effort through many lives, at last found the sure path for himself, and had reached the golden summits whence he could look down upon care and sorrow, upon birth and death. Emancipated, enlightened, he had now only to enter into

his rest. The foiled demon ventured once more into the presence of the Buddha to suggest that his work was accomplished, and the long-sought goal—eternal rest—at hand. "No!" said the enlightened one, "not until my followers understand the law and can teach it; not until Buddha, the law and the order, are established, shall I enter into my rest." With inordinate vanity the three daughters of Mara came forward, even at this eleventh hour, to tempt the Buddha with their mature loveliness, but, like Mr. Haggard's "She" in the wonderful mountain cave, they stood near the Bo-tree, shrivelled up into aged decrepitude, from which state they were, however, released on humbly asking the Buddha's pardon.

But, after all, was it worth while to think of other and less fortunate beings? Would they understand the method of salvation? Would they be able to follow the eightfold path that leads to rest? Such were the thoughts of the Buddha, and, according to the Lalita Vistara, it was nothing short of a direct, earnest, and humble appeal made by Brahma, Indra, and the other gods, that induced the enlightened one to share his knowledge with the rest of the world.

The resolution thus adopted led to the formal preaching of the law at Benares, where the eightfold way of deliverance was made known for the benefit of gods and men.

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temptation under the Tree of Knowledge at Gaya, and of the hesitation which Buddha felt to proclaim his discovery to the world, overlaid though it be with a rank growth of sickly legend, has a permanent interest which time cannot destroy.

By a judicious, if necessarily arbitrary, system of elimination and pruning—a system, however, by no means to be depended upon for truthful results—the legend of the Buddha may be made to yield an attractive picture of an earnest human soul striving nobly, honestly, and fearlessly to understand and to explain the mystery of sorrow, and happiness of virtue and wickedness. The son of a princely, if not very powerful house, brought up in comfort and honour, of a speculative turn of mind, caring little for the martial pursuits of his peers, comes, through circumstances which it is needless to speculate about, to ask himself, as did the preacher of old, "What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?"

An heir having been born to him, his duty to his family and society was fulfilled. He had attained the mature age of twenty-nine. It was time to retire from the world with its hollow vanities, its stale pleasures, and its unprofitable duties; it was time to join the society of holy hermits, who, in the solitude of the forest, were striving for peace of mind and for communion with the Deity. To the forest he goes, and after years of self-imposed penance, of study, of intercourse with dreamers and teachers, orthodox and heterodox, the noble devotee arrives at certain conclusions of his own in respect to religious doctrines and practices. After some natural hesita-

tion as to the prudence or desirability of making his opinions known to an ignorant and sinful world, he decides to do so, and sets up as a regular teacher in the holy city of Benares.

As I recalled the old story in the shadow of the temple at Buddh Gaya, I felt it a privilege to stand on a spot connected with so many poetic and religious associations, so many episodes embalmed in verse, recorded in sculpture, and still living in the hearts of many nations. Near this memorable spot, the river may still be found as of yore—sometimes flowing, sometimes dry—a veritable emblem of the instability of things terrestrial; and the eternal, if not very imposing, hills are there also, still dreaming; perhaps, of the saintly hermits who once peopled their dark caverns. A substantial temple commemorates, rather inadequately, the great deliverance of gods and men; but no Buddhist pilgrim, no Buddhist monk, is to be found in the neighbourhood, and not a single worshipper within many and many a score of leagues of it. The memory of other days lingers only in the name. The religion of Buddha, supplanted by Hinduism at Gaya about fifteen hundred years ago, has nearly forgotten its birthplace, while, under the unsparing criticism of modern European investigation, the personality of Buddha himself assumes the most uncertain outline in the dim background of Indian history. Not only has the Buddha's form become shadowy behind the mist of legends raised by his followers, but their very endeavour to glorify him has led some scholars to doubt whether the entire story about him is not, after all, only a solar allegory, as the learned M. Senart maintains.

Is the Buddhistic legend only a sun myth? was the unwelcome thought which flitted through my mind as I sat down on an old memorial stone to contemplate the temple as the sun (the real Buddha?) flooded the old building and its surroundings with a glory which ennobled and transfigured whatever it touched, even the restored temple, hardly venerable now in its nineteenth century gilt and plaster. The pleasant voices of three or four brown-limbed children, with large soft eyes, who had wonderingly followed me to the temple, and were now timidly asking for "backsheesh," recalled me gently from the regions of solar allegory.

When imagination, literary ingenuity, and destructive criticism have done their utmost, there still remains the fact of the Buddhist religion, behind which a veritable Buddha too is discernible, obscured, it is true, by such absurd legends as those, amongst a host of others, which record how, before his birth, the embryo Buddha preached to the angels who watched over him, and how in the sixth year of his Buddhahood he visited heaven to teach his dead mother the way of deliverance. But notwithstanding the legends, we may perhaps be able, under the guidance of modern research, to form a more or less accurate idea of the circumstances under which Buddhism arose, and of the earliest form of a religion which, like every other religion, has passed through different phases and undergone much modification and alteration.

The commonly accepted idea which finds a place in nearly every text-book of general or Oriental history, and in special works on the history of religions,

is that Buddhism was a revolt against the intolerable burden of the Brahmanic ritual, a reaction against the galling chains which the ceremonial law of the Brahmans—the most complicated system of sacrifices and ceremonies ever invented—had coiled round the life of the people of India, till all freedom of action was stifled, and men and women were mere slaves and puppets in the hands of the hereditary priests, who claimed the knowledge and arrogated the right of regulating the minutest details of public or private life. Buddhism is also usually represented as being pre-eminently a manly and vigorous protest against *caste*, as well as all other invidious distinctions between man and man. These views would not, we may presume, have been put forward and been so favourably received by competent scholars had there not been some plausible grounds for their support. But with the growth of knowledge in respect to Buddhist literature, an excellent plea for a reconsideration of the older opinions regarding the origin and object of Buddhism has been made out by learned students of comparative theology, and particularly by Professor Oldenburg of Berlin, in his important work, "Buddha: his Life, his Doctrine, his Order." [1] According to this learned Professor, India in the time of Buddha was divided into many kingdoms, and that portion of the country which was the scene of Buddha's missionary activity, far from being under the grinding yoke of the Brahmans, was somewhat beyond the pale of Brahmanical influences; at any rate a good deal more free from such in-

[1] Translated into English by Dr. William Hoey (Williams and Norgate, London).

fluences than the country which lay further westward. This Eastern, and perhaps heterodox, land became the theatre of the activities of rival religious teachers, who it would appear were, according to the fashion of the time, founders or important members of competing monastic orders. Amongst these leaders of men, who were not necessarily Brahmans, the noble Gautama attained a pre-eminent position; not to the exclusion of others, however, for a certain contemporary and rival of his, Nâtaputta, founded a sect (the Jains) which exists in India even to this day; and one of Gautama's own followers, Dewadatta, broke with his master and founded an order of his own during Buddha's lifetime.

The community in which Buddha and his contemporaries laboured had already attained its maturity. It had grown familiar with discussions on all the important problems of existence; and it is evident from the extant literature that disputatious philosophers, conceited sophists, overbearing and vainglorious dialecticians, not slow to slander one another or use opprobious epithets, were only too common in the time of Buddha.[1] The religious and philosophical opinions current in that land were not those which find favour with a fresh, vigorous, and progressive race, an historical people confident in themselves and in their protecting gods; but rather those which are natural to a worn-out society, only anxious for peace and rest. "The old childlike joy in life so manifest in the Vedas had died away."[2] The

[1] See Dr. Fausböll's "Sutta-Nipâta," pp. 164–174.

[2] Mr. Rhys Davids in "Encyclopædia Britannica," article Buddhism.

Aryas in their new home had pondered and disputed till they had philosophized away all that makes life beautiful, enjoyable, glorious; leaving only a residue of misery and death as the undesirable heritage of unhappy man. Whence this pessimism? Surely the endless monotonous plains, the brazen sky of summer, the soppy ground and steamy heat of the rains, the malaria-laden atmosphere of autumn, redeemed only by the briefest of mild winters, is sufficient to account, in a good measure, for the feeling. Where everything grows up rapidly and as rapidly decays, where men and women who reckon not many years of life have already, in the relaxing climate of Eastern India, passed their prime, have already outlived passions and ambitions, the desire for rest and retirement comes early. To live a quiet inactive life in a shady grove, honoured of men, and with little if anything to do, seems, under the circumstances, to be the most desirable existence possible, when once the too short days of youth and vigour are gone. All excitement, even intellectual excitement, becomes distasteful. Quiet contemplation and mystic reverie are alone tolerable. "There is," says the Dhammapada, "no happiness higher than rest."[1] But the climate, unfavourable though it be, does not account for all. Those other and important factors, the leaden weight of despotism, rigid caste distinctions, a vegetarian diet, and the circumscribed, uneventful life, must also have produced their full effect. The prevailing pessimism of which I write gives us the key to Buddhism, which is "to be regarded as pessimism pure and simple, and

[1] Professor Max Müller's "Dhammapada," verse 202.

as the direct progenitor of the modern German systems." [1]

Notwithstanding the religious activity of a heretical character in Behar during the time of Buddha, there is a good deal of evidence to show that the Brahmans, far from being treated as enemies in the early Buddhistic literature, were always mentioned with the greatest respect; and as for caste, it does not appear that the Buddhists, in their day of power, ever attempted to abolish it. Caste exists with Buddhism in Ceylon, and indeed it is doubtful whether it was not introduced into the island by the Buddhists themselves.[2]

There was, as we shall presently see, no place in the system established by Buddha for any active opposition to caste, any open hostility to Brahmanism, or any revolt against despotism. There was no special thought of the rights of man, or of the brotherhood of men and nations. The object of Buddhism was to *escape from* the social and political world—not to improve it. Deliverance from suffering and death—that was the keynote of Buddhism; that was all it aimed at. "As the vast ocean, O disciples, is impregnated with one taste, the taste of salt, so also, my disciples, this Law and Doctrine is impregnated with one taste, the taste of deliverance." [3]

Buddha was neither a social nor a political reformer! He professed only to point out the means

[1] Sully's "Pessimism," p. 38.

[2] Barth's "Religions of India," p. 125.

[3] Cullavagga ix. 1, 4, quoted in Dr. Oldenburgh's "Buddha," p. 205.

of escape from the world of transmigrations. On the other hand, we shall also see that his way of deliverance implied the insufficiency of the national gods, the futility of the ceremonial law, and the inutility of the Brahmanical priesthood. In so far, then, though without open warfare against or active condemnation of the existing *régime*, Buddhism undoubtedly introduced and popularized a new order of conceptions, and has probably on this account been sharply opposed to and contrasted with Hinduism by Oriental scholars.

However, or whenever, it may have originated, the doctrine of the transmigration of souls was at the time of Buddha an accepted doctrine of Hinduism, and must detain us a moment if we are to form a just conception of Buddha's work and his place among religious teachers. Metempsychosis, or the doctrine that the soul passes through the bodies of various men in successive generations and even takes up its temporary abode in animals and plants, though it finds no place in the Rig Veda,[1] is a fundamental one in the Hindu religion, and, as Professor Knight observes, "is probably the most widely spread and permanently influential of all speculative theories as to the origin and destiny of the soul."[2] It was a prominent belief in the ancient Egyptian religion, and occupies an important place in their "Ritual of the Dead." Pythagoras (530–500 B.C.), who is stated to have travelled in Egypt, appears to have introduced the doctrine to the

[1] Professor Max Müller's "Chips from a German Workshop," vol. i. p. 45.

[2] *Fortnightly Review*, September, 1878.

Greeks. Plato (429–347 B.C.), as every one knows, indulged in fanciful speculations about the human soul, arguing for its pre-existence on the basis of the curious doctrine of reminiscence. He also believed in the immortality of the soul, and held that its transmigration into successive bodies took place for its punishment or its purification.[1] And it is a very remarkable fact in the history of human opinions that there have been sects (*e.g.* the followers of Carpocrates) who have believed that successive re-births were necessary in order that souls should "pass through every form of action usually reputed sinful, in order to complete their defiance of the powers which rule the world."[2] When and how the doctrine originated in India is not known. It has at any rate been an article of faith there for at least twenty-five centuries. If not derived directly from Egypt or the indigenous populations amongst whom the Aryas settled, it seems probable that the intense deep-rooted pantheism of the Brahmans may have suggested the idea, as an inference from the belief in the unity of all life, human or other, and the indestructibility of life as such. The ethical justification of this doctrine is the apparent injustice of the distribution of riches and poverty, of happiness and misery, in this present life. The sufferings of the virtuous become intelligible if they are the punishment inflicted for evil done in a previous existence; so also

[1] Meno, pp. 260-273; Phædo, pp. 418, 429, 430, 463; Phædrus, pp. 582, 583, of Professor Jowett's translation of the Dialogues, vol. i., 1871.

[2] Dean Mansel's "The Gnostic Heresies of the First and Second Centuries" (London: John Murray, 1875).

the triumph and happiness of the wicked are reconcilable with the sense of abstract justice, if the life of the present time is only one phase of a series of successive existences. That in the opinion of the Oriental world the doctrine of metempsychosis could afford consolation and teach fortitude in trouble, we may judge from the story of Queen Samavati, who, when her palace was on fire and all hope of escape cut off, exhorted her attendants to bear in mind that "in the countless existences that have had no beginning it would be impossible to reckon the number of times that they had perished by fire."[1]

Wherever the doctrine may have come from, or however it may have originated, its early acceptance in India is certain, and equally certain that while accepting it as the decree of a Fate superior to all gods, the Indian, in a sort of despair, cast about for some means of escape from its pitiless round of formation and dissolution. Life, in the opinion of the Indian sage, being not worth living, the idea of an endless succession of lives was simply intolerable, and the object of every religious teacher was to show a way out of this gloomy vortex of endless births and endless deaths.[2] Buddha accepted the doctrine of the transmigration of souls. He had himself—like every one else—passed through a long series of previous existences, and we are in possession of a big story-book containing accounts of his previous lives, a story-book so ancient that it is believed to be the

[1] Captain Rogers' translation of Buddhaghosha's "Parables," p. 56.

[2] "Religious Thought and Life in India," by Sir Monier Williams, p. 41.

oldest collection of folk-tales in the world. Old though it be, it has not yet lost its charm for the simple children of the East, who, in the lovely palm-groves of Ceylon and elsewhere, still listen to its recital with wonder and delight.

In respect to the Buddhist doctrine of Metempsychosis, we are warned by competent investigators that, according to Buddha's teaching, it is not one and the same soul which inhabits in succession a series of different forms; but that, by the operation of a primordeal, inexorable, and, no doubt, inexplicable law, the action of one sentient being gives rise at its dissolution to the birth of another sentient being, whose state or condition is good or bad in accordance with the merits or demerits of the being or long chain of sentient beings whom it succeeds.[1] Like the flame of a lamp, which is not the *same* flame at successive moments, but is, as it were, being unin-

[1] "Karma, from a Buddhist point of view, avoids the superstitious extreme, on the one hand, of those who believe in the separate existence of some entity called the soul; and the irreligious extreme, on the other, of those who do not believe in moral justice and retribution. Buddhism claims to have looked through the word soul for the fact it purports to cover; and to have found no fact at all, but only one or other of twenty different delusions which blind the eyes of men. Nevertheless, Buddhism is convinced that if a man reaps sorrow, disappointment, pain, he himself, and no other, must at some time have sown folly, error, sin; and if not in this life, then in some former birth. Where, then, in the latter case, is the identity between him who sows and him who reaps? *In that which alone remains* when a man dies, and the constituent parts of the sentient being are dissolved; in the result, namely, of his action, speech, and thought, in his good or evil *Karma* (literally his 'doing') which *does* not die."—"Buddhism," by T. W. Rhys Davids, p. 103.

terruptedly extinguished and re-kindled, so sentient existence flows on, never the same, yet always linked with preceding sentient existences. But "the number of these beings never varies save on those few occasions when one of them, either in earth or heaven, attains Nirvana."[1] Such were the subtle ideas of the Buddhist metaphysicians; which did not, however, trouble the common people, who naturally believed in the identity of the person or soul through successive lives.

According to the Buddhists, the eightfold path leading to enlightenment and deliverance is made up of right faith, right resolve, right speech, right action, right living, right effort, right thought, right self-concentration,[2] and involved, it will be observed, not only good conduct, but also intellectual excellence and self-restraint. Self-mortification, which holds the first place in the Hindu scheme of deliverance, is left out by Buddha, whose teaching in this respect diverges entirely from the orthodox school from which it sprang. "Not nakedness, not platted hair, not dirt, not fasting, or lying on the earth, not rubbing with dust, not sitting motionless, can purify a mortal who has not overcome desires."[3]

The gods, whether Hindu or other, have no special place in the Buddhistic system. The existence of gods and spirits is not denied—quite the reverse; but the gods, like men, are themselves subject to the evils of birth and death. They may

[1] Mr. Rhys Davids in "Encyclopædia Britannica," article Buddhism.

[2] Dr. Oldenberg's "Buddha," p. 128.

[3] Professor Max Müller's "Dhammapada," verse 141.

in previous lives have been men, or animals, or plants, or may again in future lives pass through like forms, so it is useless to look to them for assistance. True, the gods enjoy a very much longer and happier existence than men do, but the world of the gods, like the other worlds, has its limit of duration and is reorganized at the end of each *Kalpa*. Under such a system of belief the gods dwindle away into insignificance, and with the degradation of the old gods their priests necessarily sink into the background. Indeed "God and the Universe trouble not the Buddhist; he knows only one question, How shall I in this world of suffering be delivered from suffering?" [1]

The morality of Buddhism is of the highest type. "It will not be deemed rash," says the Roman Catholic Bishop Bigandet, "to assert that most of the moral truths prescribed by the gospel are to be met with in the Buddhistic scriptures." It should be borne in mind, however, in this connection, that Buddha says coldly: "Let no man love anything; loss of the beloved is evil. Those who love nothing and hate nothing have no fetters. . . . From affection comes grief, from affection comes fear; he who is free from affection knows neither grief nor fear," [2] which may be wise counsel from Buddha's point of view, but is assuredly selfish, and differs from that other injunction: "Love thy neighbour as thyself." But leaving comparisons aside, the accepted Buddhist doctrine of moral retribution must have had a wholesome effect upon the life of the follower of

[1] Dr. Oldenberg's "Buddha," p. 130.

[2] Professor Max Muller's "Dhammapada," verses 211, 213.

Gautama, who is warned that "not in the heavens, not in the midst of the sea, not if thou hidest thyself away in the clefts of the mountains, wilt thou find a place on earth where thou canst escape the fruit of thy evil actions."[1] On the other hand, good actions as certainly brought their reward in the present or some future life; in this or some other world. But even good actions cannot relieve a man from the necessity of re-birth, though they might help him to the attainment of that frame of mind which leads to enlightenment and eventual emancipation from birth and death. Final and complete deliverance could be attained only through *Nirvana*, which (we here follow Mr. Rhys Davids) is a sinless, calm state of mind; perfect peace, goodness, and wisdom; to be followed after the natural dissolution of the body by "utter death, with no new life to follow." Professor Max Müller, while admitting that according to the Buddhist canon "Nirvana, the highest aim, the *summum bonum* of Buddhism, is the absolute nothing," believes that the popular view of Nirvana represents the original teaching of Buddha, and that according to this popular view Nirvana is "the entrance of the soul into rest, a subduing of all wishes and desires, indifference to joy and pain, to good and evil, an absorption of the soul in itself and a freedom from the circle of existences from birth to death, and from death to a new birth."[2] But an existence without wishes and desires, without joy and pain,

[1] "Dhammapada," verse 127.

[2] Introduction to Captain Rogers' translation of Buddhaghosha's "Parables," pp. xl., xlv. Trubner and Co., 1870.

without even a preference for good or evil, if not annihilation is very near it indeed. Professor Oldenburg, on his part, trys to show that Buddha himself purposely and deliberately evaded this important question.

Whatever may have been the stern creed of the philosopher, the rank and file of Buddhists did not look forward to annihilation, even as a *final* state, to be reached by the soul "after having passed through the worlds of the gods and of the highest spirits," [1] and it was perhaps rarely if ever seriously sought after even by the philosopher. The popular mind never did accept the philosophical negation, but imagined for itself pleasant heavens of enjoyment beyond the dark valley. And there were hells, too, for the wicked. "Some people are born again; evil-doers go to hell, righteous people go to heaven; those who are free from all worldly desires enter Nirvana." [2] Virtue and good works here would entail, as a natural consequence, happiness and reward in the next existence: wickedness and wrong actions the reverse. This was enough, surely, for the ordinary man. He was by no means under the necessity of seeking after annihilation, and if it was really—as their philosophers perhaps held—the highest attainable good; why, let those who wanted it strive for it. The layman, at any rate, had no hope of attaining Nirvana and annihilation as the result of his labours and conduct in this life. It was the monk and the monk alone who, cut off from contact with the world and its temptations, could have

[1] Professor Max Müller's "Essay on Buddhistic Nihilism."
[2] Professor Max Müller's "Dhammapada," verse 126.

any rational expectation of attaining the necessary freedom from desires of all kinds which preceded and led to Nirvana—renunciation of the world being indeed the first step towards freedom. Accordingly we find that Buddhism was essentially a monastic system, "a church of monks and nuns," with the absolutely necessary and very convenient addition of lay sympathizers, supporters, and followers, who, if cut off from the highest possible reward, had still much to look forward to. For, as Professor Oldenberg remarks: "The Buddhist believer who did not feel in himself the power to renounce the world, could console himself with coming ages; he could hope for this, that it might then be vouchsafed to him, as a disciple of Mettayya, or one of the countless Buddhas who shall come after him, to don the garb of a monk, and to taste the bliss of deliverance."[1] This, then, was the religion which Gautama went forth from Uruvela—now Buddh Gaya—to preach to men and gods.

From the very earliest times this was the most sacred spot in the Motherland of Buddhism. Here was the "Tree of Knowledge" which early became an object of deep veneration and a place of pilgrimage for monks and nuns, and the celebration of special festivals. Where the temple of Buddh Gaya has stood for thirteen centuries, there was, before its erection, a *Vehara* or monastery.[2] So that on this spot, year after year, tonsured monks in orange-coloured rags, admitted from all castes without distinction,[2] pledged to poverty and chastity

[1] Dr. Oldenberg's "Buddha," p. 387.

[2] This was not a Buddhist innovation. Admission to Hindu

and bound to abstain from willingly taking the life of any creature, have passed the rainy season in quiet meditation and solitary study, or perhaps not less frequently in quarrelling, evil-speaking, and cursing, for we learn from the story of Tissa-Thera and others that the monks were not above such weaknesses.[1] From this place they would go daily, almsbowl in hand, to the neighbouring villages, to beg the morsels for their daily meal of rice, bread, fish, or even meat;[2] and here, in accordance with the rules of the order, they would punctually meet twice a month, at night, for the performance of the most important duty of the public confessional. Nuns, too, probably availed themselves of the shelter afforded by the Vehara at Buddh Gaya, for women were admitted into the order, although always regarded as in subordination to the monks.

When the rainy season was over, the monks would begin their annual wanderings through the country, carrying with them the doctrines of their church. Doubtless it was these annual missionary wanderings which helped so much to spread the religion of Buddha amongst a people who, weary of Brahmanical tyranny and interference, must have sighed for a little freedom of thought and action.

The Buddhism which spread far and wide amongst

ascetic orders was also open to men of all castes, a fact which looks like a standing protest against the proud exclusiveness of the Brahman.

[1] Buddhaghosha's "Parables."

[2] The use of meat as food does not appear to have been prohibited, although the monks themselves were required not to kill any living thing. Buddha himself died after a hearty meal of young pork.

the people could not, however, have been the philosophical creed which has as its highest aim *Nirvana and annihilation*, to be attained only after complete extinction of all desire for life, all preference for good or evil, right or wrong. Such a creed was undoubtedly calculated to produce only a narrow, selfish, and exceedingly limited sect. What the Buddhism was which made its way to popularity we may gather from such a work as Buddhaghosha's "Parables," a collection of very ancient stories,[1] designed, it would seem, to illustrate how virtue, and especially liberality to monks, is rewarded; and how wickedness, but more particularly offences against the monks, is punished in succeeding existences. One gem there is in this collection, the story of Kisâgotami and her dead child, in which the universality of death is touchingly and beautifully brought home to the understanding of the bereaved mother. But apart from such literary interest as they may possess, these so-called parables are almost all of them extravagant, stupid, and tiresome, full of marvels and puerilities. For example, in these tales the monks fly about and transport themselves from place to place in an incredibly short space of time. One monk forbids the sun to rise, and it obeys; another, to gratify a whim, peoples a monastery with a thousand phantom monks of his own creation, and so on.

[1] "I do not think that scholars calling these parables the parables of Mahinda, if not of Buddha himself, and referring their date to the third century B.C., could expose themselves at present to any formidable criticism."—Professor Max Müller's Introduction to Captain Rogers' translation of Buddhaghosha's "Parables," p. xvii.

What these parables really do inculcate is liberality and kindness to monks. Be liberal to the monks, and you will get an immediate and manifold reward, or perhaps as soon as you die you will be re-born the son of a great king, or other important personage. Do evil, and especially be niggardly towards the monks, and you must expect poverty and want in your next life, or you may be condemned to boil for ages, like a grain of rice, in the great hellpot prepared for evil-doers. Such a system, leading inevitably to the pride, luxury, ignorance, and corruption of the monks, contained within itself the seeds of its own decay, and it is not surprising that when it degenerated—as it seems to have done quickly enough into devil-worship[1] and witchcraft, the powerful hereditary Brahmanical priesthood were able to exterminate Buddhism in India during the eighth and ninth centuries of our era. Of the history of this period we know nothing. History was, for many reasons, never cultivated in India; but if Dr. Mitra is right, we have, alas! instead of the history of the stirring events of a most important period, a monstrous and absurd allegory about a giant some hundreds of miles high.

If the foregoing account of early Buddhism be a fairly correct one, the reader may well ask why there is any temple at all at Buddh Gaya. If the gods cannot help men, to whom has the temple been erected? Let us explore the fane itself for an answer. Entering the *cella* by the eastern and only

[1] In Buddhaghosha's parables we are told that "all who make offerings to the guardian-Nats of trees will be rewarded ("Parables," p. 139).

door, we find a huge gilt figure of Buddha. There it is, seated cross-legged, with listless hands and impassive features, stiff, constrained, conventional; the embodiment, in concrete form, of the highest ideal of Indian religious aspiration; "the man who is free from credulity, but knows the uncreated, who has cut all ties, removed all temptations, renounced all desires."[1] There sits the Buddha of the East, the duly canonized saint of the Romish calendar, for, strange as it may seem, Buddha and St. Joshaphat are undoubtedly one and the same person.[2] Although not a god, it is not difficult to understand how the gratitude of men would lead them to raise temples in honour of the man who, higher than gods, taught them the path of deliverance. But after all, in a religion like Buddhism, the temple is really an anomaly, and a recent well-informed writer tells us that in China, where Buddhism is the nominal religion of the majority of the people, the temple "is from time to time used as a theatre, a club, a caravanserai, or a market. It contains no furniture than the altar and the stools on which rest the different forms of Buddha," which are readily removed and placed upon the ground without ceremony to suit the convenience of the traveller who may use the temple as a rest house.[3]

The life history of Buddha, and what he himself

[1] "Dhammapada," chap. vi. p. 97.

[2] On this point the reader may consult Professor Max Müller's Essay on the Migration of Fables ("Selected Essays," vol. i. pp. 541–547).

[3] "China: Its Social, Political, and Religious Life," by M. G. Eug. Simon, pp. 64 65. London, 1887.

actually taught, some four and twenty centuries ago, must ever remain doubtful matters, and doubtful too will always be the vexed question of the extent to which Christianity has been influenced by Buddhism and Buddhism by Christianity. In the absence of any reliable chronology to help us, and with a mass of legends at our disposal instead of history, we shall never be able to know, with any degree of accuracy, at what particular time special institutions, ceremonials, or creeds came into existence in the East; we shall never have any reasonable confidence in the dates assigned, by this or that scholar, to the ancient works on which we must fall back for our facts about the Eastern world; nor probably will scholars ever be able to tell us to what extent these works have undergone alteration and modification in comparatively modern times. Under such circumstances, the interesting controversy as to whether the undoubted resemblances between the Buddhist and Christian monastic systems are due to the influence of Buddhism on Christianity, or the reverse, will probably remain unfruitful in its results. Of this, however, we can assure ourselves, that primitive Buddhism was something different from, something superior to, modern Buddhism, of which, as might have been expected, there are many existing varieties. Even the stay-at-home Englishman has become familiar with the Buddhist idols in the museums, and their so-called prayer-wheels, hollow cylinders containing written prayers, which, set revolving by water power or other means, grind out the prayers of a household or a village. He will even find, in the national collections, the hideous masks used in

Ceylon[1] and elsewhere by modern Buddhists in their devil-worship; and he can see supposed sacred relics of Buddha himself in the British Museum.[2] The worship of relics early obtained favour in the Buddhist Church, and has not lost its fervour, if I may judge from what I saw in 1874, when I had the good fortune to witness the procession of elephants carrying, by torchlight, the supposed tooth of Buddha through the streets of the beautiful mountain town of Kandy, in Ceylon, with the usual accompaniment of drums and other equally noisy instruments of music. With respect to these worshippers of the tooth relic, a recent writer says:—"In practice the Ceylon Buddhist, among the masses, is both better and worse than his creed. Better, because instead of a distant Nirvana, or a series of births, he has before him the next birth only, which he thinks will be in heaven if he is good, and in hell if he is bad; because he calls on God in times of distress, and has a sort of faith in the One Creator, whom his priests would teach him to deny. Worse, because his real refuge is neither Buddha, nor his books, nor his order, but devils and devil-priests, and charms and astrology, and every form of grovelling superstition."[3]

Preparing to leave the temple about which I have been writing, I witnessed a scene which showed me how completely Hinduism had appropriated to its own use this holy place of the Buddhists, and how futile had been the teaching of Buddha to lift from off the shoulders of his countrymen the burden of

[1] British Museum, case 19–26. [2] Ibid., case 155.

[3] Article on Buddhism by the Bishop of Colombo in *Nineteenth Century* for July, 1888.

the Brahmanical ritual. Near the old temple two men were performing the ceremony of the *shraad*. They had come from long distances, and were both elderly men. A boy Brahman officiated. These three sat down on the ground together; the boy repeated the prescribed formularies, and from time to time took lumps of wheat-flour mixed with water from a brass plate and placed them on the ground before him. The two men repeated the words of the Brahman youth, and put little pats of flour on the ground as he did, and their ancestors had gained one more step towards the attainment of happiness.

A last look at the old temple with its new face, and then homewards. My path lay by the tombs of the *Mahants*, who had appropriated to their own use this sacred spot at Buddh Gaya. If the Buddhists are right, those defunct Mahants must still have been near me, though somewhat transformed, for Buddhaghosha assures us that "whoever shall take for himself or for another any consecrated land, shall become a mite, or white ant, upon that consecrated land for the whole of a hundred thousand cycles." Perhaps I inadvertently crushed them under foot, only to be re-born there and then.

PART II.

I.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

In a work published a few years ago, Mr. Talboys Wheeler wrote :

"As a matter of fact, plots and intrigues of one sort or another are the daily life of the natives of India. There are more plots and intrigues in a single establishment of native servants than in a hundred English households. An Englishman in India, who chooses to study the character of his servants, will know more in a few months of native thoughts and ways than he can learn in books from the study of a lifetime." [1]

No one who knows anything about the matter will hesitate to endorse this opinion, with the very necessary caution, however, that although native servants in the households of Europeans in India possess, to the full extent, the general characteristics of their fellow-countrymen, they form, after all, a very small class out of the vast population of the country regarding whose domestic life, whether in the hut of the peasant or the *zenana* of the gentleman, Europeans in India have little direct knowledge. At the same time it has to be borne

[1] Note at page 628 of Mr. Talboys Wheeler's "Short History of India." Macmillan & Co., 1880.

in mind that the native servants of Europeans in India form a class very considerably above the average of their fellow-countrymen in intelligence and experience of the world. So that however ignorant and superstitious they may appear in these pages, the bulk of the Indian people—the agricultural population—must be placed upon a decidedly lower intellectual level.

The following sketches of the domestic life of the lower orders are, in every case, based on full notes jotted down at the time at which the events described actually occurred or the anecdotes were related to me, and, whatever their value, may at least claim to embody, as accurately as possible, the facts which came under my observation.

II.

WITCHCRAFT, DEMONIACAL POSSESSION, AND OTHER SUPERSTITIONS OF THE PEOPLE.

DURING the intensely hot summer nights at Agra we were obliged to keep nearly every door and window of our *bungalow* open to let in any wandering breeze that might be about, and since thieves (and they abound in that district) might quite as easily as stray zephyrs find their way into the house, it was necessary to have a night-watchman, specially entrusted with the guardianship of the premises during the hours of darkness. The *chowkeedar*, as this watchman was called, received the sum of five rupees as his monthly wages, and lived in a small out-house in the compound. All night he was supposed to be on the look-out, taking his rounds and, according to Indian custom, uttering unearthly yells to scare away robbers. But from dawn till dewy eve his time was his own. To sleep away a good portion of the day when the rest of the world was astir, and to wake alone all the quiet night long, was a dull, lonely life, so one day our chowkeedar

brought home a wife to cheer his solitude and prepare his *rotee*. The woman was in rags, and filthy rags too, when she came to live with the chowkeedar, but he bought her a new cloth as a nuptial present on the day she joined him. When he made her acquaintance—shall I say fell in love with her?—she was employed in grinding corn for a miller in the bazaar, who provided her with food in return for her labour. For months, perhaps for years, she had laboured for him at the monotonous drudgery of grinding corn in a hand-mill. From morning till evening her duty had been to make the upper revolve upon the nether mill-stone with one hand, while she fed the hopper with the other, but yet she was in the miller's debt to the extent of four rupees. Leave him she could not until she had either paid or worked off the amount, which last was an impossible task, seeing that, according to the miller's calculation, her keep was at best only just covered by the work she did. As the miller's claim to the woman's services was not to be disputed, the chowkeedar borrowed the money needed to free her, and, having paid it to the miller, quietly marched her off. But the match was an unfortunate one. The half-starved woman, as soon as she got the opportunity, began to make up for the scanty meals she had so long been forced to live upon. She devoured the chowkeedar's provisions in a manner he had not calculated upon, so he told her to go back to her old master, from whom he would claim a refund of the four rupees he had paid on her account. The discarded wife, now a free woman, went her way, but the chowkeedar never

got back his purchase money. The matter, however, did not end there. Months went by, and the friends from whom the chowkeedar had borrowed the money which he paid to the miller wanted to be settled with. They (a man and his wife) came to the chowkeedar to demand payment. A dispute arose, abusive language was freely resorted to; the quarrel ended in a fight, in which the chowkeedar came off victorious. The enraged and ill-used creditors beat a hasty retreat, heaping dire curses upon the devoted head of the chowkeedar, and threatening that a day of reckoning would soon come. Two or three days after this fracas the victor was struck down by a rather sharp attack of fever. He complained of severe pain in the chest, and declared that when alone at night demons used to come and ride upon his breast. It was pitiful to see the poor man lying upon a scrap of mat, without a pillow for his head, and with only a rag of a quilt to cover him. His cabin contained but a few earthen pots and one brass *lotah* for water, and these were all his earthly possessions. Occasionally a fellow-servant would give him a drop of water, and perhaps, once a day, offer to bake him some bread. As he lay tossing in high fever on his wretched mat, he called to mind the curses that had been hurled at him by his two baffled creditors, and he was convinced that his illness was but the fulfilment of those curses. He was, in fact, according to his own idea, *possessed*, and could not possibly recover unless the curses were withdrawn. He begged piteously that the creditors he had so summarily got rid of only a few days before should be brought to him, and when

they came he grovelled at their feet, begging of them to remove the curses. At first they seemed rather surprised, but, profiting by the occasion, they promised to do so, provided he paid them up in full the very next time he received his wages from me. The chowkeedar readily consented. Thereupon the woman sat down beside him, sprinkled a little water on him, made several passes over his person in a deliberate manner with a small branch of the *neem* tree, and withdrew the curses that had been piled upon his devoted head. Relieved in mind by this simple ceremony of exorcism, the sick man began to rally rapidly, and in a few days was restored to health and to his round of nightly duty.

One morning in June my coachman fell down in a fit not far from the door of the room in which I was seated. I went out to see him, and found several natives standing round the prostrate figure, but, with characteristic apathy, simply looking on without attempting to render the slightest assistance. When I suggested that they should splash some water upon his face, all of them objected on the ground that they were not of the same caste as the coachman, and therefore ought not to do it. Amongst the on-lookers was an old woman, who stated in a very positive tone that water was by no means necessary, the proper remedy for the fit being merely to take the man's shoes off his feet and make him smell them. This remedy, although curious, was not so revolting as that recommended for the "falling-sickness" in some old books of medicine, viz., "an ounce or two of the brains of a young man

carefully dried over the fire."[1] However, the man was brought round without resorting to the old woman's specific. Inquiring later in the day, I was told that the coachman was not subject to such fits, that he had never had one before, and that it was clearly a case of witchcraft. He had been sitting in a *punchayat* (or council) of his caste-people the day before, and the person against whom he had given his vote must have cursed him. Hence these dire results. But subsequently the coachman was struck down on two or three occasions by severe and very sudden fits, and himself attributed them to the spells cast upon him by a wife who had deserted him, and who, I suspect, had not been over well treated by her lord. On my giving him notice of my intention of dispensing with his services, he assured me in the most confident manner that he would not get another fit, as he had, with the assistance of an adept, sent the demon back to take possession of and plague his wicked wife, who was the sole cause of his troubles.

On another occasion there came to my knowledge the case of a woman who attributed her illness (a severe hemorrhage) to the magic arts of a fellow-servant. According to her story the man concerned had made improper advances to her, and on her repulsing him he vowed vengeance against her. A few days after this she got ill, and found out that her enemy, as we may now call him, had gone to a well with a male companion; that they had carried with them a lemon, which they cut in halves, and, repeat-

[1] Hugh Miller's "My Schools and Schoolmasters," p. 55.

ing some spells, squeezed out the juice of the fruit into the well, accompanying the act with the expression of a wish that the blood of so and so (naming her) might pour out as the juice had just oozed out of the lemon under the pressure of their hands. The curse, of course, had its effect, and the unfortunate woman was a miserable sufferer for her virtuous conduct. It only remains to be added that the hapless woman learnt the details above given from the wife of the man who aided her enemy and quondam lover in carrying out the mischievous and wicked rites which cost her so dear.

Not only have the powerful spells of the wicked to be dreaded; the dead are not less capable of resenting any neglect or affront, and when offended have to be duly propitiated by gifts and offerings. A servant of mine at Lahore had been absent from his duties for some days on account of ill-health. Inquiring into his condition and the treatment he had been receiving, I learned that he had, a few days previously, been prostrated by an attack of fever. On the second day of his illness he was, apparently, delirious, and in that state revealed the fact that his fever was due to his having pulled down some branches from a *babool* tree (*Acacia Arabica*) which grew over a Syud's grave just outside my compound. It was a miserable dilapidated structure this Syud's grave, but the dead occupant was none the less jealous of its honour. According to the sick man the Syud had taken possession of him, and was wreaking his vengeance upon him for having dared to dishonour his shrine. Something had to be done to

appease the irate saint, and so the invalid's afflicted wife caused a *mussuk* (leather bag) of water to be poured over the Syud's grave, apparently to cool his temper. At the same time a fellow-servant, skilled in such matters, administered a charmed clove to the patient in order to break the spell which had been cast upon him by the indignant Syud. But the invalid, instead of improving, became worse, and in his delirium the spirit of the Syud, which had now taken full possession of him, kept uttering through the mouth of the fever-stricken man such contemptuous remarks as these—"Oh, indeed! you have eaten a charmed clove, have you? I will give you a stomach full of charmed cloves!"

The unsuccessful exorcist was called in to try another spell, but as, after the clove episode, the efficacy of his spells appeared somewhat doubtful, the precaution was also taken of endeavouring to pacify the Syud with gifts. He was promised a *cheragh*, or light, upon his tomb, for a certain number of successive Thursday evenings, with an offering of sweetmeats in addition, if he would but forgive the offender. Still the invalid did not mend, and his wife was making up her mind to promise the Syud a more worthy peace-offering (a cock or a kid) if he would only restore her husband to health, when I became acquainted with the particulars of the case, and recommended her to postpone her vow of a costly offering till she had first tried the effects of sulphate of quinine. I gave her some of the drug with directions how to use it. She followed my instructions, and, to her great satisfaction, found that the bitter white powder had the power either of expelling the

spirit or of appeasing it, for her husband quickly rallied, and was able to resume work after a few days. I have reason to believe, however, that, after all, the recovery was attributed more to the spells that had been employed and to the promises made to the saint than to the drug I had administered.

Another interesting case came under my notice at Lahore. A servant, a punkah-puller of the mehter caste, was reported dying in an out-office in my compound. The man had been at work only a few hours before. I went down to see him, and found him stretched out on a low cot with his eyes shut. His weeping wife and son were endeavouring to rouse him, but he could not or would not move, or give any sign of consciousness. A dose of brandy and water, put into his mouth by spoonfuls, followed after a little while by a strong cup of tea, brought him round. On questioning him as to the nature and causes of his illness, he asserted that a Syud took possession of him every now and then, and was persecuting him on account of the non-fulfilment of certain vows. It appeared that three or four months previously his wife was very ill, and while sitting beside her, with some members of the family and a few visitors, the spirit of the Syud took possession of him. He began to be violently agitated, and then spoke, not in his own person, but in that of the spirit that possessed him. He talked about many things, and in his discourse predicted that the sick woman, his wife, would die within a week. This prediction uttered in her hearing so alarmed her that she begged piteously for life, promising, if she were spared, to offer five

goats and five cocks on the Syud's grave. She did not die and did not fulfil her vow, so the angry Syud was now victimizing the husband, presumably as the responsible head of the house.

This supposed possession of mehters by the spirits of deceased descendants of the Prophet of Arabia seems to indicate a strange confusion in the religion of the lower castes in India, though the spiritual anarchy in the present case is easily accounted for, being due, most probably, to a growing respect for Islam, a consequent recognition of the potency of the Mussulman saints, and an imitation of certain Muhammadan practices to be described later on. But the ordinary Mussulmans of India, almost as deeply tainted by caste prejudices as their Hindu fellow-countrymen, do not take this view of the matter; and when consulted about it, usually aver indignantly that no Syud's spirit would demean itself to enter a *mehter's* body, but that men of that despicable caste, when possessed, must be under the influence of some BHUT (devil) of their own.

One morning the dead body of a large and venomous snake, which had been killed near the servants' quarters the night before, was brought to me. It appeared that the cold clammy weight of the horrid reptile upon her neck had roused a woman who was sleeping in the open air at the door of one of the out-houses. Instinctively, she flung the snake off, and immediately called for help. Her brother-in-law, the *dhoby* or washerman, ran to her help, and despatched the intruder with a stick. On the follow-

ing day the dhoby was taken ill, and his work got into arrears. I wanted to know what was the matter with the man, and found out that his illness was due solely to his having neglected to give the customary funeral feast in memory of his deceased wife, who had died in her native village some months previously. The snake which had visited the servants' quarters was none other than the late wife herself, and had come to wreak her vengeance on the woman, who, it would appear, had stood very much in the way of the funeral feast, and was, moreover, responsible for the neglect which the deceased had experienced during her lifetime. Somehow, and for unknown reasons, the Fates had protected the offending sister-in-law, but the neglectful husband was suffering the punishment of his sins of omission and commission, and it was quite clear that it would go hard with him if he did not very soon make amends for his past misconduct. The first thing to be done was to rescue the sufferer from the vindictive clutches of the spirit of the departed wife. An exorcist was called in, and immediately commenced operations. In the open air, beside the bed of the sick man, he placed a lighted *cheragh*, or lamp, and just before it, drew on the ground a small circle about three inches across, with two diameters at right angles to each other. He put a couple of cloves at one end of each diameter. Outside the circle he laid a few more cloves and also three small packets, one containing flowers, another camphor, and the third incense. Standing up, with his face turned to the full moon, which was just rising, the exorcist rubbed an open penknife between his hands and kept uttering some-

thing which was meant for magical words or incantatory phrases. He then applied the blade to his forehead and sat down, still muttering to himself in a low tone. He next passed the cloves round and over the flame of the lamp. After which he gashed his own arm with the penknife, and collecting the blood on the blade, wet the cloves with it. Next he took all the cloves in his right hand and, closing his fist, passed it, heavily and slowly, over the sick man, beginning from a little above the knee and going gradually up to and round the head, as if drawing or gathering something up towards the top of the head. Whenever the invalid groaned, and he did so pretty often, partly from excitement and partly, no doubt, from the pain experienced under the rough treatment of his physician, the latter expressed his satisfaction, and seemed to coax the spirit to come out. Sometimes the spirit which had taken possession of the sick man would, as it were, struggle under the grasp of the exorcist, and seem as if about to slip away from him. At this his ire would be roused, and, apparently much excited, he would address the enemy in no complimentary terms, while he himself groaned and puffed as if in a severe and exhausting conflict. At length the spirit was safely conducted to the crown of the invalid's head, and was then successfully drawn out of him.

After the completion of this satisfactory operation, the exorcist offered the cloves to the bystanders, but they prudently declined the proffered gifts, objecting to be made the recipients of the sick man's cast-out spirit. After some wrangling, the exorcist determined to retain the cloves himself, and con-

cluded the ceremony by burning some camphor in the flame of the lamp.

The personal appearance of the exorcist was anything but prepossessing. He looked from the very commencement of his proceedings wild and excited, but during his struggles with the refractory spirit he was like a madman.

The reader familiar with the customs of savages, as described by travellers, and reproduced in most modern works on "the primitive condition of man," will at once recognize in our exorcist the *medicine-man* of savage countries, of the wilds of South America, the islands of the Pacific Ocean, of Australia and Africa; but he seems peculiarly out of place in India, in contact with English civilization, and in the broad light of the nineteenth century. However, in India he is, and, I doubt not, will long continue there, sharing with native and European drugs, the credit of driving away disease and of restoring the sick to health and strength.

Not only is exorcism commonly practised for the cure of the sick; but also for the relief of sufferers from the effects of snake bites, the bites of dogs or the stings of venomous insects and other animals.

A female servant attracted my attention one night, by her loud cries. She had been stung on the foot by something in the dark—a scorpion she said—and was apparently in great pain. Her first thought was to obtain the assistance of a man who happened to be living in my compound, and was well-skilled in affording relief in such cases. My aid not being required, I did not interfere. The man whose services were in request came as soon as he was

summoned, and began making sundry passes over the wound, in order, as he said, "to bring the pain down;" but instead of coming down it went on extending higher up the limb. The woman evidently suffered a good deal. At this stage something like the following colloquy took place:—

Woman (sharply): "What are you about? The pain instead of coming down is going up, higher and higher. Oh dear! oh dear!"

Man: "Wait a bit, mother; be a little patient."

Woman (apparently not relishing the advice): "Be patient! you say. Be patient! while the pain is extending higher up. Oh! ma: oh! ma-go."

Man: "Yes, mother, yes!"

Woman (testily): "Why do you say 'yes, yes?' I want the pain to come down."

Man (naïvely): Of course, mother; but the pain must first be allowed to go up, and then I'll bring it down."

Woman (fairly enraged): "Be off, you fool! Bad luck to you," &c., &c. "I'll go and ask the *sahib* for some medicine."

All the subjects of demoniacal possession referred to in the preceding pages belonged to the lowest castes of the Indian community, which lie practically outside the pale of Hinduism. Amongst them the belief in demoniacal passion is in full force to-day, although it is by no means confined to them. The air is pervaded by magic and witchcraft. The happiness, the health, the very lives of men, are at the mercy of spells and counter-spells. Ay, and the very gods themselves are not exempt from the influ-

ence of magical rites; but must obey the behests of the powerful magician.

Syuds,' being lineal descendants of the great Prophet of Arabia, have, as we have already seen, special influence on the fate of men, but they by no means enjoy a monopoly of power for good or evil over the living. The disembodied spirit of any man or woman may become troublesome or dangerous. A deceased wife is particularly to be dreaded by her successor.

A female servant alluding to the death of a man's third wife, remarked to me that such things always occurred amongst the wretched Muhammadans, but that people of her caste avoided dangers of that sort. She explained that the death of the second and subsequent wives was usually caused by the spirit of the first wife, whose jealous spite brought them to an untimely end. To avert danger from this quarter the spirit of the deceased wife had to be propitiated, and it was customary amongst her people to do it in this wise. The likeness of a woman done in silver (known as a *thuppa*) was worn as a locket by the second wife. This image represented the first wife, and had to be constantly propitiated. At every meal the second wife offered a pinch of food to the "thuppa" before she herself began to eat, and when she was about to put on new clothes or ornaments the second wife first offered them in due form to the "thuppa." Appeased and gratified by these attentions, the spirit of the first wife was won over to spare her successor.

There appears to be a kind of *possession* known

amongst the Muhammadans in India. The symptoms are these. Some man, usually one of blameless life and strict habits, is selected by a departed Pir or Syud as the vehicle for conveying his wishes to the living. The entry of the saint's spirit into the body of his chosen vessel is accompanied with violent convulsions. The man possessed of the spirit is thrown into a state of uncontrollable agitation. He foams at the mouth, and usually tosses his head from side to side, or up and down, in a frantic manner. At length he speaks, asserting energetically that he is some Pir or other, and demanding that a certain offering shall be made at his grave, which seems to be all the Pir cares about. The awe-stricken bystanders promise everything required, and the spirit departs, leaving his medium in a state of much physicial prostration. I have had personal knowledge of several cases of this kind.

The 24th of November, 1886, being a Muhammadan festival, I paid a visit to the shrine of Dada Gunge Baksh at Lahore. I found a large concourse of people seated near the outer wall of the shrine in the open air. Three musicians, two playing on stringed instruments and one on a drum, were singing away lustily a hymn in praise of the saint. Several greybeards sat in a sort of solemn abstraction close to the wall, while a middle-aged man, dressed in green, with a string of beads round his neck, occupied a prominent position a little in front of the elders. The congregation and onlookers, consisting of two or three hundred persons, sat huddled together on *durries* or carpets in the foreground. As

the music went on with a peculiar sort of throb, one here and another there from the midst of the congregation seemed convulsed, as if by galvanic shocks. Presently their movements became more energetic and violent. In one case a man threw himself forward, resting, in a crouching position, on his hands and knees. He swayed his head in a frantic manner from side to side, and it was a marvel to me how it escaped collision with the ground. But escape it did. Exhausted at length by the wild energy of his movements, the man fell in a fit upon the ground. One of his companions now came forward and began to *shampoo* his limbs, in order, I presume, to calm the excitement of his overwrought nerves. Another man, after the usual premonitory convulsions, writhed on the ground in wild contortions. Two men rushed forward, apparently to prevent him from hurting himself, and holding him up by the waist, allowed him to fling himself backwards and forwards in the wildest manner possible. Several other men became excited and convulsed under the influence of the Pir, but all the cases of possession I noticed could be referred to one or other of the types I have just described. None of the *convulsionnaires* uttered a single word throughout the proceedings. On a previous occasion I visited one of the favourite places for the exhibition of such manifestations. On reaching the ground, I found several persons congregated round a boy of about ten years of age, who appeared to be in a semi-unconscious state. This poor little fellow had been hanging, I don't know for how long, suspended head downwards from the branch of a tree. In this uncomfortable position he

had been swaying himself about in a sort of frenzy, and had almost lost consciousness before he was taken down. His father and other friends who were present on the spot assured me that no harm could come to any one taken possession of by the spirit of the Pir sahib. A tailor in my service, a weakly lad with a very queer look about his eyes, used to be a favourite of some Pir or other. He was fond of attending assemblies such as I have described, would readily fall into the ecstatic state, and died very young. As contributions are expected from those who frequent assemblies of the kind just described, it is evident that the guardians of the shrines where they take place reap a substantial advantage, but it is not easy to see what benefit the poor fellows get who may be called the performers on these occasions. They have themselves told me that in the ecstatic state they are unconscious of the world around them, and have the very gates of paradise opened to them.

In India we live in a world which is accustomed to receive supernatural visitants who associate familiarly with men. We are, indeed, still in the age of the "Arabian Nights." A holy Mussulman faquir, who enjoyed a considerable local reputation, told me of his own experiences with a *Jin*. The Jin, in human form, used to visit him, but always came with a green shade over his eyes, as if suffering from sore-eyes. He represented himself as a devotee who, attracted by the fame of my informant, had come to sit at his feet. He was asiduous in his attentions, and one day asked my friend if he knew who he was. On

receiving a reply to the effect that the faquir knew nothing about him beyond what he had himself stated, he said he was in reality a Jin. My friend received the statement with incredulity. Not long after this being disturbed in his devotions by the noisy chattering of two *mûnas*, my informant asked his disciple to drive them away, when what was his surprise to find the pretended devotee put forth his hand and catch the birds although they were ten or twelve feet above his head. Another time the Jin, to oblige him, caught a young fox by simply putting out his foot and placing it upon its neck. The Jin continued to wear the green shade, because he wished to escape being recognized by that well-known pecularity of Jins, their inability to wink. During his sojourn with the faquir the Jin fell out with one of the persons, a *chupprasee*, who was in the habit of visiting the holy man, and having been abused by his adversary caused the death of his children, by literally passing into the poor fellow's house, through closed doors, and strangling his unoffending infants. The mother, in great distress, came and complained to the faquir about the cruel wrong she had suffered. The holy man suggested that she should go for redress to the law courts, but she explained that it was a case of magic, and not one with which the magistrates could deal. On this the faquir reproved the Jin, and desired him to discontinue his visits; but the Jin promised better behaviour in future, and, to make amends for the murder he had committed, promised to give the object of his anger—the father of the strangled babes—whatever he asked for, provided he never told

any one how he came by it. The aggrieved father looked upon this as *une mauvaise plaisanterie;* but one day being in sore need of four rupees, he held out his cloth and called upon the Jin to fulfil his promise. Immediately four rupees fell into his cloth. After this he asked for several other things and received them; but one of the prying women of his household having found out how the money came, made a boast of it to some of her friends. The spell was broken. Nothing more was ever received, and the Jin, enraged at his secret having been made public, destroyed two more members of the chupprasee's family. At the faquir's very urgent and positive request, the Jin at length made himself scarce. Every word of this wonderful story the holy faquir assured me was *absolutely true.*

As a general rule, natives of India of all classes believe in the reality of possession, demoniacal or otherwise. They unhesitatingly admit that some favoured men and women are chosen as the media of communication between departed saints and the human race; but they are not equally ready to recognize the validity of the pretensions of particular individuals. In fact there is often an odd mixture of superstition and shrewed scepticism—or shall I say suspiciousness?—in the Indian character. I well remember a Mussulman telling me, with a good deal of humour and self-satisfaction, the following story. A Pathan from beyond the western border had arrived in his neighbourhood. The rumour went abroad that at times the spirits of certain departed Syuds descended upon the Muslim visitor, or, as the native expression

is, "got upon" him. He was under the influence now of one and now of another departed saint. Of course he became at once an object of awe and veneration to the people. Every one who longed for the gratification of some cherished desire approached him in his hour of possession, and hoped, by homage and gifts, to obtain the assistance of his controlling spirits. My informant, like others, had his end to gain, and one night, unknown to the members of his own household, stole out to pay his respects to the Pathan. It was warm summer-time, so he went out very lightly clad, and he did not wear the usual turban, in the hope that the absence of this customary head-dress might render him less easily recognizable by any acquaintances he might chance to meet. When he got near the Pathan he found a large number of persons, chiefly females, congregated on the spot. The Pathan, of course, had his satellites and attendants. Some were beating drums, others talking confidentially to the bystanders in praise of their master and acting generally as go-betweens. My informant, who watched the proceedings with keen interest, presently thought he detected manifest signs of imposture, and no longer felt disposed to crave the assistance of the Syuds through their Pathan medium. In the little gathering were some persons not unknown to him, at least by sight, and of whose history he had learned something from the gossips of the town. He could, he thought, guess pretty well what they wanted from the saint, and as he felt sure that he was unrecognized by any one present, he was tempted to perpetrate a practical joke. He sat down near one of the drummers, and,

by the help of a little silver adroitly handed to him, secured his good offices. Placing a few flowers before himself, he began in the orthodox fashion to toss his head violently from side to side with his face turned downwards, and in a feigned voice repeated over and over again, "I am Syud So-and-so," naming some saint well known to the people of that place. The drummer called attention to this remarkable case of possession, and my informant soon became the centre of attraction. Using his local knowledge and taking advantage of the credulity of the people, he was able to extract for the benefit of his friend the drummer several rupees from his deluded neighbours, giving them in return many promises and a few flowers or cloves. But this opposition business did not suit the Pathan and his more zealous supporters. Angry inquiries were made about the new-comer, and there appeared symptoms of an approaching storm. Collision with the formidable Pathans was not to be lightly risked, so my informant hung his head down and stopped shaking it, thus indicating, by a well-understood sign, that the spirit of the Syud had departed. As he had not pocketed any of the money he had gathered there he was allowed to leave unmolested, and thankfully escaped into the darkness of the night and the intricacies of the lanes with, as he laughingly told me, a confused head and a neck which, unaccustomed to such violent exercise, ached for days and days afterwards.

Any one acquainted with the history of the maddening terror which witchcraft inspired in Europe during the Middle Ages, and the horrible widespread

and barbarous persecutions which resulted from it,[1] cannot help noticing, when brought into contact with witchcraft in India, that it stands upon an entirely different footing there. The cause of this is not far to seek. In Christian Europe magicians, necromancers, witches, were regarded as the enemies of God, as monsters in league with Satan and condemned to eternal damnation. They were accordingly destroyed, at the instigation of the clergy, without mercy, and upon the warrant of Holy Scripture. To rid the earth of witches was a religious duty which the priests and ministers (Protestant and Roman Catholic alike) carried out with a burning zeal and a horrid eagerness worthy of a better cause. In India, on the other hand, especially amongst the Hindus, magic and witchcraft are not without a certain respectability. The Brahmans themselves are the possessors of spells (mantras) which even the gods are unable to resist. It is true that in the Vishun Purana it is said "he who practises magic rites for the harm of others will be punished in the hell called Krimisa" (that of insects).[2] But this threat is neither generally known nor does it practically affect the attitude of the people towards wizards and necromancers. The practisers of the black art in India may be objects of terror to the people, but they do not inspire them with feelings of *religious horror*.

According to popular belief, magicians, sorcerers, and conjurers abound in India. Most of the calami-

[1] Lecky's "Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe."

[2] Professor H. H. Wilson's translation, bk. ii. chap. iv.

ties of life are attributed to them, and it is worth noting that among certain of the aboriginal tribes "even those who are accused of being witches do not deny the impeachment, but accept the position readily with all its pains and penalties."[1] Yet the evil is not without a remedy, for sorcerer may be pitted against sorcerer, and the spells of one be nullified by the counter-spells of another. Thus also in Europe, holy water, church ceremonies, consecrated relics, and priestly exorcism were employed against sorcery, witchcraft, and demoniacal possession.

The more powerful conjurers in India inspire dread and command respect. These, therefore, live at ease on the credulity of the many, but occasionally the popular vengeance is wreaked upon some wretched man or woman who is suspected of having caused mischief, and who at the same time is not sufficiently dreaded to hold the rabble in check.

The records of our criminal courts contain many cases of this kind. The following may be cited as an example:—

"Wali, an old Bheel woman, about 70 years of age, and her sister Chitri, residents of Deshgaon, Nassick District, were believed by the villagers to be witches possessed of a hidden charm, by which they were supposed to have worked the sorcery to which the deaths of several persons in the village were attributed. . . . A religious mendicant arrived at the village and denounced the sisters as witches, and forthwith the villagers laid hold of Chitri, swung her by a rope to a mango tree, and beat her to extort the hidden charm. She escaped without serious consequences. Wali, the other sister, who had gone to

[1] Ball's "Jungle Life in India," p. 115.

a neighbouring village to beg, was fetched to Deshgaon the same evening, and was the following morning swung by the feet to a tree near the village police-station, was maltreated in the presence and with the connivance of many of the villagers, and was required to disclose the hidden charm by which she and her sister caused deaths in the village. She was removed in a fainting condition to her house, where she died the same day. Three persons were instrumental in causing her death. One, a police constable, swung her to a tree by the feet with a rope and struck her several blows with a hempen thong, another struck her with a shoe, while the third, the police *patel* of the village, superintended the proceedings and instigated violence to the wretched woman. These three persons were tried, and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment."[1]

If it were not for the protection afforded even to "witches" by the British law, cases of this kind would undoubtedly be multiplied to a very great extent. At the beginning of the present century (1802) a self-constituted native tribunal tried five women at Patna for sorcery, found them guilty, and put them to death. The case attracted the attention of the British authorities, and a proclamation was issued by the Governor-General, declaring that any persons taking upon themselves to act as the members of the irregular Patna tribunal had done, would be considered guilty of murder.[2] There is no reason to doubt that this order has had the effect of saving the lives of a great many women who would otherwise have fallen victims to the popular belief in witches and witchcraft, yet since the date of the proclamation thousands upon thousands must have perished in out-of-the-way places, at the hands of

[1] *Bombay Gazette*, 1881.

[2] "Medical Jurisprudence for India," by Dr. Norman Chevers, p. 12.

their superstitious countrymen, with the knowledge and connivance of the equally superstitious village police. Only the other day there appeared in the English and Indian newspapers a painful story of the death, under very tragic circumstances, of a woman belonging to a village in Oudh who believed herself to be possessed by an evil spirit. The woman's husband gave out that he had received a divine command to destroy her eyes, which would be miraculously restored. The villagers assembled; the unfortunate woman was held down; and, in the presence of the expectant crowd, the husband gouged out her eyes. As might have been foreseen, the unhappy victim of the barbarous operation died almost immediately.

The genius of Hinduism is peculiarly favourable to a belief in witchcraft and demoniacal possession, but the modern Hindu thinks that magic with other useful lore perished, to a great extent, with the men who fell at Kurukshetra, in the war described in the Mahabharata. Muhammadan traditions and literature are also full of records of events brought about by magic arts, but the Indian Muslim holds, like his Hindu countryman, that knowledge of these arts is in a very imperfect condition now.

In ages long gone by there existed a city whose inhabitants had attained, by unlawful and forbidden arts, to a degree of knowledge not inferior to that of the angels. Gabriel was directed to visit this city, and on entering found only children in it. The messenger addressed one of these, inquiring where the elders were, and when they might be expected

back. Without replying to the question, the child observed that he himself was quite ready to answer any questions the stranger desired to put. The angel asked where Gabriel was at that time. After a short pause, the boy replied with a thoughtful expression on his face, "I have scanned the four quarters of the universe, even to the throne of the Almighty, but no Gabriel could I find. Therefore, either I am or you are Gabriel." The messenger departed in astonishment, and carried to heaven a report of his mission; upon which the Almighty decreed that the guilty city, with its inhabitants and its thousands of volumes of unhallowed lore, should be whelmed in one common ruin. A troop of angels was sent to overturn the city from its very foundations, and bury it with its inhabitants for ever. There escaped, however, from the general destruction, a stray leaf or two of the books of divination, and on the imperfect hints derived from these, the modern sciences of magic and astrology have been reared during a succession of ages.

On the superstitions of the people of India volumes might be written; for India is still where Europe was in the dark ages, and belief in witchcraft, demoniacal possession, the transmutation of metals, the efficacy of charms, spells, and love-filtres, is quite general amongst all classes of the people. Let me add a few instances to those already given.

Not long ago a native, referring to the wasting disease (marasmus) from which an infant seemed to be suffering, assured me that even the shadow of the little child falling upon one in health might prove fatal to the latter. The disease, he said, might in

some cases be cured at the expense of the vegetable world; for example, it was well known that if a child suffering from marasmus were taken into a sugar-cane field, there undressed and bathed, and its cast-off clothes left on the ground, the child might recover, but in that case the *sugar-cane would all be blighted.* I subsequently learned another mode of curing the disease. The mother of the sufferer should secure a black dog and decapitate it in the dead of night. She should then boil its head in water, and bathe herself and child in this broth, exactly at the hour of midnight.

During an excessively dry summer, as I was sitting one evening in the open air, the clouds began gathering rapidly overhead. Every one was anxiously looking out for rain. The sultry heat had caused an outbreak of sickness, and the price of food had gone up considerably. I remarked to a native standing beside me that we would now in all probability have the much desired rain. He looked up towards the dark overcast sky above, and then shaking his head doubtfully, expressed his fear that the rascally *bunneahs*—vendors of food-grains and other articles of consumption—would not let it rain. The idea was a new one to me. I was familiar with the old Hindu notion that the dark clouds are malicious demons who obstruct or intercept the rain-fall, and are only overcome by Indra's flashing thunderbolts, which rend them asunder in the interests of the human race and the parched and gaping earth. But I had never heard that the bunneahs were credited with meteorological powers

of so very important a character. I pressed the man to explain his remarks. "Don't you know," he said, "that it is to the interest of the bunneahs that the prices of all articles of consumption should be as high as possible, and that rain should not fall? Well, to attain their object, they make cakes of wheat-flour and other things, and then deliberately deal with these heaven-sent gifts in such a manner as to offend the gods and make them withhold the rain." He went into details with respect to the proceedings of the bunneahs which I need not mention here.

At another time I learned that a bunneah had recourse to a still more effectual method of keeping off the rain. He had a *chukra*, or spinning-wheel, made out of the bones of dead men. Such an article could only be made very secretly and for a large sum of money, but its action was most potent. Whenever the clouds were gathering the bunneah set his virgin daughter to work the chukra the *reverse way*, and by that means unwound or unwove the clouds, as it were, thus driving away the rain; and this over and over again, notwithstanding that the young Hindu maidens had gone forth, harnessed themselves to the plough, and with suitable ceremonies and offerings had invoked the gods for rain, while the Muhammadans on their part had assembled in the Musjid and offered up prayers to Allah for the much needed showers.

Where credulity abounds, impostors are of course not wanting to take advantage of the credulous, as the following anecdote amusingly illustrates.

A cowherd reported in his village that he often

heard a human voice proceeding from the interior of an old neglected grave, demanding to be released. The villagers assembled round the spot indicated. They heard the stifled voice with their own ears, and following the advice of the herdsman, and one or two others in league with him, opened out the dilapidated grave, not, however, without trepidation and many misgivings. As the result of their labour, they exhumed a miserable looking man in grave-clothes and covered with mud. To the inquiries of the bystanders regarding himself he would give no verbal response, but by means of signs, which were readily interpreted by his confederates, he gave the simple rustics to understand that he had been dead for ever so long a time; that his soul had been in paradise, and had but just returned to reanimate his body, which had been lying in the ground exempt from the influences of decay. The subject of such marvellous experiences was, of course, an object of veneration to the people. The herdsman and one or two others constituted themselves the guardians of the "resurrected" man, and shared with him the gifts and offerings of the credulous peasants.

As in Europe during the Middle Ages, and much later too,[1] so in India to-day the subject of the transmutation of metals is one which attracts a good deal of attention. As a teacher of science

[1] "Goethe in Frankfurt was busy with researches after the 'virgin earth.' The philosophers' stone had many eager seekers. In 1787, Semler sent to the Academy of Berlin his discovery that gold grew in a certain atmospheric salt when kept moist and warm."—Lewes's "Life of Goethe," vol. i. p. 319.

I have frequently been questioned about the practicability of converting copper into silver or gold, and I have found that a very strong and widespread confidence prevails, even amongst the educated, in regard to the existence of a secret art of transmuting metals known to a few adepts. Indeed, some men have assured me that they have seen the process successfully carried out, although they were not admitted into the secret of the art.

III.

OLD FAKEERAH AND HIS CONJUGAL TROUBLES.

YEARS ago, when I was quite a child, our old hom of pleasant memories was broken up, and th numerous servants of a comfortable Anglo-India household had, nearly all of them, to be discharged Amongst those who were told that their service would not be required any longer was Fakeerah, wh had been my father's "bearer," or valet. He was Muhammadan of Colgong, or Kahalgaon, and owne a small bit of land in his native village. When th time for settling up accounts arrived he came, witl tears in his eyes, to receive his well-earned wages Palm joined to palm, he stood before my mothe and respectfully said, with unfeigned emotion, "Fo years I have eaten the sahib's salt, and now tha he is gone shall I desert the children? You canno do without servants. Some you must have, howeve few in number. I will stay with you for smal wages, or even for none at all. Have I not my bi of land at Colgong?" The man was thoroughly i earnest, and, true to his generous resolve, remaine

in our service on much smaller wages than he had before. He accompanied us to Calcutta, was in all things thoroughly honest and trustworthy, evinced a genuine affection for us children, and seemed contented and happy. But as years went by a home-sickness came upon him. The picturesque little village, under the shadow of the low hills, on the banks of the Ganges, where the noisy river rushes madly amongst the noble granite rocks he knew so well, seemed to draw him with irresistible power, and so one day he explained, in his usual deferential way, with many apologies and much hesitation, that he wished to visit his "moolluk," and begged leave of absence for three months. According to Indian custom he brought us a *budlee*, or substitute, and arranged to proceed on his journey with some companions who were going towards the same part of the country as himself. There were but a few miles of railway open in India at that time; the journey to Colgong was to be performed on foot by easy stages. As *Thugs* and other highway robbers were unfortunately too common in those days, no traveller would make a journey without companions; few would venture on the road without arms.

The appointed day arrived. Fakeerah came to make his farewell *salaams*. He was a slim man, a little over five feet in height, with fine, well-cut features, and a clean brown complexion. His moustache, except at the two ends, was clipped close and partly shaven, so as to leave a clear narrow space immediately over the upper lip. This is the orthodox Muhammadan style of dressing the mous-ache, and has for its object to prevent food eaten by

the believer from being contaminated by contact with the hair. The beard, however, is allowed to grow in full luxuriance, and in Fakeerah's case attained a length of several inches without the slightest curl or irregularity, although now largely sprinkled with grey.

He was ready for his journey, with his loins girded up, and well do I remember his appearance as he came to take leave of us. A small bundle of clothes was tied across his back; a strong bamboo stick rested on his right shoulder, carrying his quilt slung easily upon it, and at the extremity of the stick was his pair of shoes. One would think that the feet, and not the end of the stick, was the proper place for the shoes; but the poor native, accustomed from infancy to go barefooted, reserves his shoes for rough ground, and willingly removes them when treading smooth roads or plodding through mud and slush. At his side was a *tulwar*, or curved sword, in a leather scabbard, purchased for the occasion, and from his left hand, by a strong cord, hung his brass *lotah*. The sword was, of course, for his protection from Thugs, *dacoits*, wild beasts, and other dangers of the highway; the lotah and string were to enable him, during his long and dusty march, to draw cool water from the roadside wells; what money he had was carefully secreted in the folds of his waistband. Thus fully equipped Fakeerah departed on his journey to Colgong, between which place and Calcutta there lay some two hundred and fifty miles of road, passing for long distances through dreary jungles tenanted only by wild beasts or robbers.

Three months passed away, four and five months

passed away, and yet Fakeerah did not return. We began to speculate amongst ourselves whether he had been detained by the charms of home, or whether sickness was the cause of his prolonged absence. We even began to fear that he might have fallen into the hands of Thugs and been strangled by them. Many a story of these dreadful assassins had we heard and remembered only too well, for Colgong (Kahalgaon), was a noted centre of their criminal practices at the time of which I write, and, indeed, had enjoyed an unenviable notoriety in this respect at least as far back as the days when the Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen Tsiang, visited India (A.D. 637).[1] So much was Thuggee in our thoughts in connection with the prolonged absence of our faithful old servant, and so interesting, for many reasons, is that unparalleled system of assassination and robbery that I trust the reader will pardon a short digression on the subject in this place. Thuggee is an institution peculiar to India. Amongst the customs of most barbarous races there have existed practices of a character revolting to our modern ideas; but nothing more repugnant to feelings of humanity could be imagined than the cold-blooded assassinations which, for purposes of gain, *but under religious sanctions, and with religious ceremonies*, were systematically committed by the Thugs in a land where civilization had already made considerable progress. Thuggee was not confined to any one part of India, but extended far and wide, and, curiously enough, embraced both Hindus and Mu-

[1] General Cunningham's "Archæological Survey of India," vol. xv. p. 35.

hammadans in the great brotherhood of crime. A secret dialect and a set of secret signs facilitated intercourse between the initiated from different parts of the country, while a share in the spoils of their murderous expeditions, or the superstitious awe inspired by their mysterious calling, secured for them the protection of the Zemindars, or landholders, and the native police. Strange to say, the members of the Thug fraternity belonged to many grades of society, to different castes, including *Brahmans*, and generally followed some peaceful and respectable avocation. They were artizans, agriculturists, and traders, a fact which seriously hindered the British authorities in their endeavours to bring the criminals to justice; for when a suspected gang was followed up it soon disappeared in the mass of the apparently respectable population.[1] Whenever a plundering expedition was to be undertaken, a number of the brotherhood assembled by appointment at some convenient spot, and travelling along the road in various disguises and for various ostensible objects, fell in with travellers along the highway. Trained in every

[1] "Dr. Cheek had a child's bearer, *i.e.*, a he-nurse, who had charge of his children. The man was a special favourite, remarkable for his kind and tender ways with his little charges, gentle in manner, and unexceptionable in all his conduct. Every year he obtained leave from his master and mistress, as he said, for the filial purpose of visiting his aged mother, for one month; and returning after the expiry of that time, with the utmost punctuality, resumed with the accustomed affection and tenderness the charge of his little darlings. *This mild and exemplary being was the missing Thug!* Kind, gentle, conscientious, and regular at his post for eleven months in the year, he devoted the twelfth to strangulation." — Tayler's "Thirty-eight Years in India," p. 194.

artifice required to promote the success of their horrible trade, the Thugs easily gained the confidence of the unsuspecting wayfarers with whom they fell in along the dusty high-roads of the country, and when a suitable opportunity—for instance, a secluded locality—presented itself, treacherously strangled their victims in cold blood. No feeling of pity ever stayed the fatal noose when once the omens were propitious. What mattered it to the Thugs that the companions who trudged by their side were, after years of absence, returning to their distant village homes, and to their expectant wives and children? What mattered it to them that the men they wished to murder were fellow-countrymen and co-religionists? Had not the goddess Kali delivered the victims into their hands? and were they not bound, under penalty of incurring her displeasure, to take their lives with the consecrated *roomal*, or handkerchief. The deed accomplished, the murderers at once secured the property of their victims, even to the clothing on their persons, and then with the *sacred axe* buried the bodies out of sight as quickly as possible. In most cases an impenetrable mystery shrouded for ever the fate of the unfortunate wayfarers, and the Thugs, emboldened by success and immunity from punishment, pushed their cruel trade with greater audacity than before. There was a method in the perpetration of these revolting crimes, and an observance of religious ceremonies, which excites astonishment and lends special and peculiar interest to the practices of this extraordinary sect of assassins. It is difficult to tell when the Thugee system first began to develop

itself in India.[1] It can undoubtedly date back to a distant period; but it was not till 1829 that the British Government made a serious and systematic attempt to suppress the widespread evil which seemed to have become naturalized in every part of India.

The legend which enshrines the origin of Thuggee relates that at some remote period a terrible demon, named Rukut Beij-dana, who was so gigantic that he could stand in the deepest part of the ocean with his body above the waves, was busy destroying the human race when the goddess Kali interfered to save mankind, and with her mighty sword severed him in two pieces. But from his blood other demons sprang into existence, and as fast as Kali disposed of them more monsters were generated from the blood of those who had perished by her sword. Weary of her fruitless labour, the goddess created two men out of the sweat which trickled from one of her arms, and giving them *roomals* or handkerchiefs directed

[1] Sir R. Temple thinks "it arose from the disregard of human life caused by scenes of incessant bloodshed during wars and revolutions, and from the demoralizing effects of the ruthless system of spoliation established by the Mahrattas and continued by the Pindaries" ("India in 1880," p. 196). Probably these causes helped to encourage the spread of Thuggee, but it undoubtedly existed long before the time of the Mahrattas and Pindaries. We have an account of the capture of about a thousand Thugs near Delhi in the thirteenth century (Elliot's "Muhammadan Historians of India," by Dowson, vol. iii. p. 141). The grave of one reputed founder of Thuggee, Shah Nizamaldin, who lived about six hundred years ago, is still to be seen at Delhi. But the system, as already indicated in the text (p. 280), can probably claim a far higher antiquity.

them to strangle the demons. When they had duly accomplished their alloted task, and came to give up the *roomals* to Kali, that grateful goddess bade them keep those serviceable weapons and hand them down to their descendants with instructions to use them, for their own profit, in the destruction of all men who were not of their kindred.

To the goddess Kali, therefore, the Thugs looked for protection, and they believed that if they carried out their horrid murders only when the omens were propitious and the proper rites and ceremonies had been observed, they would enjoy both safety and prosperity. With what revolting indifferenee their cold-blooded and wholesale assassinations were carried out, and afterwards talked over with pride and pleasure, became known to the world when the task of suppressing Thuggee was taken in hand by the East India Company, and the secret doings of the fraternity were dragged to the light of day.

Once attacked with vigour and determination, the timidity and treachery of members of the infamous brotherhood helped the Government officers materially towards the suppression of the abomination. Many Thugs apprehended upon suspicion, losing faith in their patron goddess, turned king's evidence and revealed the secrets of the fraternity, their slang vocabulary, their private signs, their religious ceremonies, superstitions, and methods of procedure. From the mouths of these approvers particulars were obtained which, while enabling the police authorities to track the criminals and bring them back to justice, afforded the British officers the opportunity of unfolding a page in the secret history of human

institutions which could hardly be surpassed in gloomy interest.[1]

However, although the perils of the road beset with Thugs and haunted by wild beasts were real enough, Fakeerah did come back at last, and presented himself at the door well and hearty. His face, which was naturally light-complexioned for a native of India, was burnt black by the sun, his grey beard looked ragged, and his moustache over-grown; but he was not much the worse for his long journey, and in his undemonstrative way appeared pleased to see the "baba logue" (children) again. We wanted to know what had kept him away so long, and were forthwith admitted to a tale of domestic woe. When he reached his village his old friends were resolved upon giving him a wife. Probably he was not reluctant to get one, although he protested that such was not the case. A wife was found for him, and, evidently pleased with his partner, he determined to bring her with him to Calcutta. This time the journey was to be made by water. A boat bound for Calcutta was found at Colgong, and Fakeerah engaged places in it for himself and his wife. There were several other passengers for the capital and intermediate places; but Fakeerah's wife was the only woman on board. Hardly had the boat proceeded a day's journey from its starting place when a storm arose, and it was completely wrecked upon a sand-bank in the river. Either because she was the only woman on board, or on account of some

[1] For a short account of Thuggee the reader may consult Mr. James Hutton's "Thugs, Dacoits, and Gang-robbers of India." W. H. Allen and Co., London.

unlucky marks about her face or person, Fakeerah's wife was fixed upon by the travellers as the cause of their misfortune. Her husband apparently shared this opinion, and, reluctantly we may presume, conducted her back to her village, whence, after some delay, he started once more for Calcutta, but this time alone. It was useless to argue with the old man about the absurdity of supposing that his wife could possibly be the cause of the wreck of the boat. His reply was that all the passengers said so, and that seemed to settle the matter for him. With the lapse of time, his opinion in regard to the blame attributable to his young wife for their mishap on the Ganges seems to have undergone some modification, for he asked and obtained permission to go and fetch her. The long journey home and back was this time successfully accomplished, and the couple arrived at Calcutta apparently quite well and happy. The wife was rather good-looking, and attracted some attention by her costume, which was that worn in her native village; a full skirt and short bodice, with a sheet or *chudder* thrown gracefully over the head; quite unlike the saree of Bengal. She was very shy, and kept her face concealed as much as possible, whilst she made the very best use of a pair of handsome black eyes. However, the treacherous chudder revealed enough of her face, from time to time, to enable us to say that it was decidedly bright and pretty. Absorbed in her domestic duties, we saw and heard little enough of Fakeerah's wife. But after a few months the climate of Calcutta began to disagree with her. She was constantly ill. Her husband grumbled. "What was the use," he said, "of a wife

who could not cook his rice, and who needed to be nursed and looked after? She would be better at home." So he sent her back to her village.

Fakeerah himself did not think very much of Calcutta. He used to pronounce it a perfect Babylon, the very soil of which was demoralizing, and, to give point to his opinion, related the following story to me:—

An old woman, a native of a remote village in the west, came to Calcutta to pay a visit to her son who was employed in that city. She was very infirm, and so old that she had not a tooth left in her head. After being two or three days in Calcutta, the old woman said to her son, "Do you happen to know any suitable person to whom you could get me married?" The son, unwilling to expose his mother to ridicule, recommended her not to mention her wish to any one, promising, at the same time, to make every necessary inquiry in person. He thus put her off for some days. Unable, at length, to withstand her importunities, he told her that he was himself anxious to get married, but desired to take a wife from amongst his own people. He advised her to select a husband in the same quarter. In order to carry out this object they started homeward the next morning, the son carrying a bag containing something which he was very careful to conceal from his mother. When they had travelled for two days, the son told the mother that they were approaching a village where he had many friends and acquaintances, and he knew of one at least who would be delighted to marry her. "Fie! my son," was the reply, "thus to jest with an old woman like me—your mother too—

tottering, as I am, on the brink of the grave." The son said no more. That evening he carefully spread the contents of his bag under the mat on which his mother was to sleep. In the course of the night she said to him, "Son, I have been thinking over what you said to me to-day. True, I am an old woman, but not so very old after all, and, if I married, I would be no longer a burden on you, my dear boy. Do you know anybody in this village who would make an eligible match for me?" "I shall see about the matter to-morrow," said the young man. On mentioning the proposal to the old woman next day, she looked rather foolish and disconcerted, but treated the affair as a mere joke. "You surely did not think I was in earnest?" was all she said, and the son heard never a word more about the matter. At Calcutta she had been eager for marriage, but away from the naughty city the desire had passed away, except when the long extinguished fires were temporarily revived by the proximity of the mere soil of the Indian Babylon, which the son had carried in his bag and spread under the old woman's mat by way of experiment.

To return to old Fakeerah himself. Whether his wife died on her return home I am not aware, but the lonely bearer suddenly consoled himself with a new wife. We were at this time living at the little French settlement of Chandernagore. The new wife was stout, and by no means young according to Indian notions, a fact which seemed to require some explanation. It was no use, the garrulous old man said, to marry a mere girl who knew nothing, whose thoughts would run upon finery, and who would

neglect the house and his interests; nor would it do to seek a wife from amongst his own people, for the air and water (*hawa, panee*) of Calcutta would not agree with the up-country woman, as he had already found out to his cost. The new wife was a native of Bengal, was not too young, and in all probability would keep good health and be useful. Keep good health she did, and proved it by having a remarkably good appetite. Being in her own country and amongst her own kith and kin, she had many friends and visitors, and rather liked to entertain them and show her hospitality. Poor old Fakeerah was in despair. All this was more than he had bargained for. What he wanted was a thrifty wife who would save him from some domestic duties, look after him when he happened to be sick, and save money. Great was his disappointment. At the end of the first month of his wedded life he came, with tears in his eyes, to relate the details of the consumption of rice, dall, ghee, &c., that had taken place in his household, and protested that he must certainly get rid of the woman, who was no better than a voracious glutton and would assuredly land him in jail if he kept her much longer.

Just at this time we removed to Calcutta, and, taking advantage of the opportunity, Fakeerah gave his wife the slip, and congratulated himself upon his fortunate release from such a terribly extravagant woman. However, he never dared to show his face in Chandernagore again, for fear of the personal vengeance of the relatives of his deserted wife. Legal proceedings he seems never to have dreaded or dreamt of.

All alone again, the old man went on quietly enough for a little time, but presently set up a constant complaint of the hardship of having to cook his own food. After our past experience we could guess pretty well what all this would lead to, and one fine day Fakeerah asked a week's leave to get married again.

A young woman of a rather flashy appearance was his new partner. She was quiet enough, and apparently the couple got on fairly well together. One morning the old man came with a very mysterious look on his face, and kept muttering to himself as he went about his duties. Inquiry elicited the whispered statement that his wife had the extraordinary habit of stealing out on moonlight nights into the garden, and collecting flowers. There was no doubt about it; he had watched her himself over and over again and could not get rid of the idea that she was a *witch*—for did any one ever hear of an ordinary woman doing such things? It was too terrible; he could not consent to live with her any longer. We suggested that she might be a somnambulist, but that did not mend matters at all. What arrangements he made with her I do not know, but get rid of her he did, at the expense, I fancy, of a pretty big slice out of his hoarded savings. For two or three years the old man continued a crusty, grumbling solitary. He lived very parsimoniously, and out of his wages (which had by this time been considerably increased) and little extras in the way of *dustooree* had made a respectable hoard. The rent derived from his little bit of land at Colgong had also been carefully put away. Silver and gold orna-

ments were the form his savings took, but a bag of rupees was also quietly hid away at the bottom of his old trunk.

My duties next took me to Burdwan, and while there, old Fakeerah found a fourth wife. She was quite a girl, with a frank open face, beautiful large eyes, a neat slim figure and a rather loud voice. She wore only the *saree*, which is a single sheet wound round the waist, brought gracefully over the bosom and then passed over the head, generally leaving the back quite bare. This dress, peculiar to the women of Lower Bengal, when made, as it usually is, of diaphanous material, forms, to say the least, an exceedingly light garment, and used to be an object of special aversion to my old bearer; but he had to put up with it now. Instead of being kept down, the Bengali girl soon got the upper hand of the old man. She would tell him that she was not going to be treated as he had treated his other wives. She would scold him well, and between bullying and wheedling managed to get possession of all his money. I wonder what he would have had to say, after his extensive experience, on the subject "Is marriage a failure?" which is exercising the minds and pens of so many persons just at present.

The poor old fellow got very ill, and died, when I was away from home. Loyal to the end, his last words were a touching message to me, expressing his regret at not being able to see me ere he died. The widow, enriched with the spoils she had secured, went off in a few days with a bugler in a native infantry regiment, and we never heard of her again.

I mentioned at the beginning of this paper that the

subject of my narrative was a Muhammadan; but I believe he had been born a Hindu and possessed a sort of doubtful belief in the Hindu gods, though, like other renegades, he was disposed to show up his old religion.

His lingering faith in the gods of the Hindu pantheon, as well as his desire to vindicate the supremacy of Islam, may be illustrated by a couple of anecdotes.

I was observing to him one day, that in a certain district of Bengal the women seemed healthier and stronger than the men; to which his immediate reply was, that probably the districts where such was the case were those in which peculiar respect was paid to some female divinity, Kali perhaps, who would of course favour her own sex. The recognition, in this way, by Indian Mussalmans of the power of Hindu deities is by no means uncommon. Islam, originally deeply imbued with superstitions of its own, has acquired a further tincture of the same element from its contact with Hinduism, and from its Hindu converts. So that many an Indian Muslim of the lower classes readily acknowledges the truth of the Hindu legends, assigning a place to their gods amongst the numerous demons and malignant spirits in his calendar, precisely as the early Christians did in respect to the deities held in esteem by the Pagans.

According to Fakeerah, the Hindu god Jagannath, of whose terrible car so much has been written by the missionaries, was originally nothing more nor less than a thievish, lying cook in the service of a Muhammadan Pir. Once Jagannath, tempted by the savoury odour of some delicacy which he was pre-

paring for his master, indulged himself by partaking of a portion of it. The Pir detected the delinquency, and took his servant severely to task for his misconduct. Jagannath protested vehemently that he was innocent of the fault imputed to him. He had not even tasted the dish. The Pir became angry, and, pious man that he was, directed that Jagannath's hands and feet should be cut off as a punishment for his theft and mendacity. In this mutilated state the wretched man (no longer in a condition to help himself) implored his master either to assist him to drag on a weary existence, or else to put an end to his life and his sufferings without delay. The Pir's heart was touched with remorse and pity. He advised his unhappy cook to proceed to a certain place, where he predicted he would be treated with the highest consideration by the Hindus—would, in fact, be venerated by them as a deity. Of course the Pir could not be wrong, and this is the origin of Jagannath the famous divinity of Puree, worshipped by the Hindus under the form of the misshapen torso of a man with mere stumps for arms and legs.

The perpetual rivalry and hatred existing between the Hindus and Muhammadans in India, which has given rise to many a sanguinary scene and many a bitter memory, which even within recent years has caused serious riots, and which at the present moment divides them into two hostile camps, has not been barren of fruits of a less tragic character. Stories holding up one side or the other to ridicule are common. Here is one from a Muhammadan source :—

Some Hindu and Muhammadan sepoys were

travelling together. At a well the Hindus of the party noticed a tulasi plant, and, after performing their usual ablutions, went and paid their respects to it, prostrating themselves on the ground before it. The Muhammadans laughed at them. A dispute arose, and the followers of the Prophet of Mecca, applying the logic so commonly used in such cases to prove the vanity of idolatry, pulled up the plant by the roots, to establish their contention that it was a mere stock and had no power to resent an outrage. The occurrence naturally led to much ill-feeling and strained relations in the little party. The Hindus looked confidently for the vengeance of the offended deity upon the sacrilegious Muslims, but their expectations were not realized. Some days after the incident of the tulasi plant, one of the Muhammadan sepoys prostrated himself with great veneration before some bushes on the wayside. The Hindus noticed this, and coming forward began, by way of retaliation, to tear up the plants which had been the object of his adoration. He warned them that his gods were not so supine as the tulasi plant respected by themselves, but would take speedy revenge for the outrage; and, true enough, they soon had cause to repent of their rashness, for the Muslim wag had got them to handle a lot of stinging-nettles.

IV.

BHUJNU AND CHEROKEEAH, OR MAN AND WIFE.

FAR away amongst the lofty pine trees of cool and pleasant Simla, a woman came to our cottage one summer day to offer herself as *Ayah* (lady's maid, or child's nurse) in our household. She was from Kotgurh, a picturesque little village nestling in the valley of the Sutlej, under the shadow of lofty mountains, not many miles from the spot where the river debouches into the plains of Northern India.

When the woman presented herself she was attired in the costume of her country. Her headdress consisted of a peculiar cap, covering the hair almost entirely, with a band right across the forehead like that worn by certain nuns. She was dressed in a very full skirt gathered in at the waist, a loose bodice, with long sleeves, reaching down to the hips, and a long folded piece of white cloth wrapped round the neck. Her most conspicuous ornament was a huge nose-ring. She looked what she really was, a genuine rustic, with nothing of the smartness or address of the experienced, well-trained ayah about her. But she had a frank, intelligent face, and a

certain natural grace which won favour for her and outweighed all her deficiencies. She was duly engaged and put to work, after she had changed her Kotgurh costume for the customary dress of her new occupation.

Bhujnu, for that was her name, made herself very useful, and, being quick of apprehension, turned out an excellent servant. On leaving Simla at the end of the season, my wife promised to re-engage her on our return from Calcutta in the following summer.

At the approach of the hot weather, when coats were becoming a positive encumbrance, and ice and *punkah-wallahs* were in demand, began the usual exodus from Calcutta of the Government establishments. Great and small hurried eagerly to the hills, scornfully regardless of the annually recurring growls of the Calcutta public, and equally indifferent to the economical objections of the Indian press. Overcrowded railway trains carried us 1150 miles to Umballah, and *dak gharries* conveyed us, jolted, dusty, and tired, along thirty-six miles of road to the foot of the Himalayas. But Simla was still a long way off. The luxury of driving rapidly up to the Indian Capua, over fifty miles of good hill-road, was not known at that time. The regular postal route to Simla was by the military station of Kussowlee, and zigzagged over one alpine range and then another, with many a splendid view of mountain scenery, and many a lovely bit of light and shade and colour upon the glorious hills to charm the eye of the appreciative traveller.

The sun was low in the heavens as we were passing along the thickly wooded road which leads

into Boileaugunge, the "west end" of Simla, and we were silently admiring the blaze of crimson with which the rhododendrons in full bloom literally lit up the hillsides from base to summit, when two figures in white hurried up to us with low salaams. They were Bhujnu and her husband Cherokeeah, who had been patiently waiting for us, day after day, at this spot. Cherokeeah, who was unknown to us, professed to be a *kitmatgar*, or table servant, and, unrolling a small pocket-handkerchief, produced a few dirty-looking pieces of paper for us to read, which were certificates from former employers. We took the pair into our service, and on reaching our house assigned them an out-office to live in. The man did his work pretty well, the woman very satisfactorily. But they did not live in harmony. There arose constant bickerings and quarrels between them, which sometimes disturbed the quiet of our compound. Annoyed by their conjugal differences, we called the pair before us, and warned them that they would both be summarily dismissed if they allowed their quarrels to trouble us. The man received this warning in silence, and went off quietly to perform his usual duties. Not so the woman, whose heart was too full, or whose tongue was less under control. She seized the opportunity to explain, in detail, how very miserable she was. Her narrative revealed domestic arrangements of so peculiar a kind, and afforded glimpses of ideas and feelings so very unlike those entertained by the Western world, that I thought it worth while to note down her statements, which I now reproduce.

According to Bhujnu's story, she had been married

to Cherokeeah for several years, when he took a fancy to her younger sister and induced her also to live with him.[1] Although the new arrangement was not quite to her liking, Bhujnu managed for some months to live amicably with her more favoured sister, and for a while things went on smoothly enough in their little village home, till the younger sister transferred her affections and herself to another man, and now, strange to say, began the discord between the husband and his wife.

Cherokeeah was deeply wounded by the desertion of his favourite, and would have it that his elder wife had either prevailed upon her sister to go away, or had driven her out of the house by unkindness. In moments of vexation he used to draw contrasts between the two sisters, much to the disadvantage of the elder one, likening the younger to an *elephant*

[1] Polygamy is not the general rule amongst the inhabitants of the Himalayas. Polyandry is, if anything, more common. A woman is often married to a whole family of brothers. It is said that fathers object strongly to give their daughters to men who have no brothers, because the death of the single husband would leave the widow without a natural protector. The prevalence of the custom of polyandry in many countries (*e.g.*, in Britain in the time of Cæsar) is well known, and its origin has generally been attributed to the poverty of the people, coupled with the habit, so general amongst barbarians, of long absences from home on predatory or other excursions, and the necessity thence arising of a plurality of guardians for the domestic hearth. Touching polyandry, Herbert Spencer says: "Some who have had 'good opportunities of judging' contend that in certain places it is advantageous. It would seem that just as there are habitats in which only inferior forms of animals can exist, so in societies physically conditioned in particular ways, the inferior forms of domestic life survive because they alone are practicable" ("Principles of Sociology," i. 677).

in grace and beauty. Under the influence of time, that great healer, the soreness may have gradually passed away, and Cherokeeah may have got reconciled to his lot, but his wounded feelings were periodically irritated by a visit from the younger woman, who had also come to Simla, and saw no reason why she should not be on friendly terms with her elder sister, for apparently there was not the least ill blood between the two women. Her visits used to stir up old recollections, and revive Cherokeeah's unreasonable anger against his wife. Bitter upbraidings followed each of these unlucky visits, and the squabble usually ended in the woman getting a beating, whereupon she would wisely raise an uproar in order to bring the other servants to her rescue. Sometimes the husband would end the quarrel by refusing to take food, and threatening to commit suicide. If he persisted in abstaining from food for a day or so, the miserable wife would become frantic and fall at his feet promising to get back her sister. The younger woman, however, was too comfortable in her new companionship to have any wish to return to the old dual arrangement.

Such had been the state of affairs for some months. So weary had the poor woman become of the cat-and-dog life they were leading, that she wished to separate from her husband, and had repeatedly begged of him to set her free. But to this he would not consent. He knew his own interests too well. She was valuable property; she was a source of income to him. Her wages were larger than his. When the question of separation came up between them he never failed to remind her that he had paid

five rupees for her to her parents, and he protested that he was not going to be done out of his money. I suggested to the woman that, as this purchase money seemed to be the great difficulty in the way of her emancipation, she had better pay the amount and be done with it. With a blank look on her face, she inquired where she was to get the necessary rupees from. I pointed out to her that she earned every month twice as much as her husband claimed on account of purchase money, and might easily pay him the five rupees he gave for her. "Oh, no!" she said, with something like despair in her tone, "don't you see all my earnings are his? I cannot pay him out of what is his own property." It was no use explaining to her that she was a free woman and not a slave. Amongst us, she would say, it is different, for with her the customs and usages of her caste and tribe were everything, let Acts of Parliament and of the Indian Legislature be what they may.

Loth to interfere too actively in a peculiar dispute of this kind, I refrained from pressing the point, and let the matter drop, hoping that the threat of dismissal would keep the badly-yoked pair in order. But further disputes soon arose, followed by applications for my arbitration now that the facts of the case had been made known to me. The course of action generally adopted in such cases by Europeans in India is a very simple one. They haughtily or petulantly decline to listen to the statements of the troublesome disputants; dismiss them at a moment's notice, and engage other servants in their places. This course was open to me, but I hesitated to drop the curtain in this summary

fashion upon a little domestic drama so characteristic of Eastern life, and I therefore adopted another plan. To the great joy of the ayah, I offered to pay off the intolerable debt of five rupees which hung like a millstone round her neck. Cherokeeah accepted the offer—not, however, without great reluctance, and only after his claim to all the woman's worldly possessions on that day, including her ornaments and even her very clothes, had been admitted. Willingly did Bhujnu part with all her worldly possessions to be freed from a bondage which had become intolerable to her. The money was paid, and the property handed over to Cherokeeah. Henceforward the two lived apart, and peace reigned in our compound.

At the end of the Simla season, when the time arrived for our return to Calcutta, the woman earnestly begged to be furnished with a written statement, signed by me, to the effect that Cherokeeah had received back, in full, the five rupees he had paid to her parents on the occasion of their marriage. This was a precautionary measure. She was going for the winter months to her native village, and feared that her late husband would claim her again and deny having received payment. I gave her the paper she wanted, and we had reason to know that, armed with this important document, she was able, without the intervention of any of Her Majesty's divorce courts, to keep herself free from the clutches of her former lord and master, and to enter into other matrimonial arrangements on her own account.

V.

THE SLAVE GIRL.

THE particulars embodied in the following brief narrative will help the reader to understand the estimation in which women, at any rate those of the lower classes, are held in India.

In the summer of 187–, a young man of the Mehter[1] caste made overtures for the hand of a young girl with whom, we may suppose, he had fallen in love. Her guardians, distant relations of hers, were willing enough to get her married; but the opportunity was a legitimate one for making a little money, and they were not going to forego their right to sell the girl whom they had maintained for some years. The young man's proposal was accordingly received with favour, and he was informed that he might take the girl to wife on paying her guardians thirty rupees in hard cash.

Our swain was absolutely penniless, and thirty rupees a large sum in his eyes, seeing that he would probably never at any time of his life earn more than five or six rupees a month; but then he could

[1] The Mehters are a low caste, mostly employed as sweepers and scavengers. They are a specially intelligent class, strong, plucky, and somewhat quarrelsome.

borrow—every native of India knows how to do that, and perhaps some *bunneah* or other would advance the required sum, on the personal security of a friend or two. It is true that the money-lender, handing over good current coin of the realm on such very slender security, would expect and, as far as possible, would screw out exorbitant interest; that, however, was a secondary consideration. To get thirty rupees and the girl of his fancy was all that the lover cared about at the moment: how the money, when borrowed, was to be repaid, with the interest upon it, did not, I feel certain, trouble him at all. He cast about for some one to help him to raise the required amount. A good-natured but improvident friend, named Ghusseetah, who had a large family of his own to support, and only some fifteen rupees a month by way of income—the joint earnings of himself and his wife—was induced to be surety for the ardent young man. An accommodating bunneah advanced the needful sum of money, the girl's guardians received it, and the marriage was duly celebrated.

Bholee took his young wife home, and the girl was, in accordance with time-honoured custom in India, made the drudge and slave of her mother-in-law. For well, indeed, might Indian daughters-in-law exclaim in Shelley's words—

> "Even from our childhood have we learn'd to steep
> The bread of slavery in the tears of woe."

What actually occurred in the little household is unknown to me, but it appears probable that the young wife chafed under the treatment she ex-

perienced, and, perhaps, became stiff-necked and obstinate, for eventually her mother-in-law pronounced her incorrigible. Domestic peace being impossible under the circumstances, her husband turned her adrift, leaving Lahore at the same time to avoid being called to account for his conduct by the *panchyat* of his caste.

The bunneah had not been paid a single fraction of the sum originally borrowed from him, though he had managed to extort a respectable amount of money under the name of interest. Ghusseetah, the surety, was warned that as the principal had absconded, he would be required to pay up to the uttermost *cowrie*. Already in the toils of the bunneah on account of other transactions, and often, when short of cash, dependent upon him for the bare necessaries of life, the poor man acknowledged his obligations and humbly promised to pay. But was there no compensation to be had for the loss occasioned by the base ingratitude of his defaulting friend? He pondered the matter, and struck upon the idea of boldly annexing the girl who was the innocent cause of his indebtedness. He told her that as her husband had absconded without paying the money, and had left him solely responsible to the bunneah for the amount wherewith she had been purchased from her guardians, she was now his (Ghusseetah's) property. The argument appeared unanswerable, and, fully persuaded of the justice and lawfulness of this conclusion, the young woman accompanied her new master to his home, and was in due course made over to the tender mercies of his wife. The slave thus acquired—for

slave she practically was, be the law of the land what it may—had now to do all the household work of a large and very poor family. In such a position her duties were by no means light. She had to fetch water for domestic purposes, grind corn into flour for the daily consumption of the whole family, prepare the meals, wash the pots and pans, sweep the room and at any rate once a week plaster it over with a mixture of clay and cow-dung, and last, though not least, she had to look after the little ones. Hers was one incessant round of toil, and although recognized as a member of the household and entitled to a share of food, she had to wear rags, to endure the angry vituperation of her mistress, and often the blows of the children, who did not fail to remind her of her servile condition.

When Ghusseetah and his wife entered my service as sweeper and ayah respectively, they were the owners of the slave girl. They took up their abode in a room in my servants' quarters or out-offices. The room was about eight or nine feet square. It had one entrance-door, and on the opposite side a little window, with strong wooden bars across it. At this time the family consisted of a son, about eleven years of age, and his child wife; two younger boys, an infant in arms, and the slave, whose age was probably not more than seventeen or eighteen. In my compound the family lived quietly enough, and we had no knowledge of the peculiar position the young woman occupied in the ayah's household. The debt, however, still remained unpaid, and the bunneah threatened legal proceedings.

Although no beauty, the household drudge was

young; and youth, clothed even in dirty rags, has its attractions for the opposite sex. A tender feeling for the girl sprang up in the impressionable heart of her master, an elderly grey-headed man, with a rather gaunt appearance. Certain indiscretions on his part aroused ayah's suspicions. She thereupon, unknown to her husband, suggested to the bunneah that he should arrange, if possible, to pass the young woman on to some man or other who would engage to take over the debt. The bunneah, who had probably been paid a portion of the interest on the money advanced by him, found a willing bachelor, and arranged the matter satisfactorily. But now a curious difficulty arose — Ghusseetah was not as willing as his wife that the young woman should leave his house. He threw what obstacles he could in the way of the final conclusion of the new arrangement. He did not approve of the future husband, he did not feel sure that the bargain was a safe one. Matters had, however, under his wife's guidance, advanced too far to be easily set aside. The girl was made over to her new lord, who, when he came to conduct her home, brought a gaudy suit of clothes for her. Arrayed in her new finery, and escorted by a small party of friends, she went off cheerfully to her new lord's home, and the fate that might be in store for her there.

On the young woman's departure Ghusseetah broke down completely. He refused to eat or drink, and became reduced to a veritable skeleton. Disconsolate and down-hearted, he wrapped his ex-slave's ragged and dirty sheet about his loins, took a staff in his hand, and wandered forth alone, threatening to

go away for ever to some distant land. When he thus cast domestic life behind him and started forth on his tramp, his poor wife and children followed him crying bitterly, and begging of him to come back. The loud lamentations of the deserted family attracted my attention, and from a window I observed the pathetic scene, to which the distraught manner and unusual garb of my generally very sober and orderly servant gave no slight tincture of absurdity. I did not at the moment know what was the matter, and suspected a conjugal difference of a more or less trifling kind. Regardless of the entreaties of his wife and children, Ghusseetah went his way. At night, however, he returned home; but not to eat or to drink. He threw himself down on the bare ground, with only the ex-slave's cast-off rags as a pillow. This display of tender feeling was too much for the long-suffering wife. She snatched up the rags, flung them on the fire and burnt them to ashes, while, in Indian fashion, she heaped curses upon her ex-slave, her parents, grand-parents, forefathers, and upon her unborn descendants. Ghusseetah, on his part, refused to be consoled without Subratun, whose name he kept repeating in his sleep. There was no sham about it; the man was evidently quite unhinged. In the day he used to wander about disconsolate; at night he would come home to a restless bed. He gradually got so weak and ill that his family became alarmed for his safety. He told his wife and children that now the end was at hand, all he wished them to do for him was to follow him to the grave, and to deposit in it his favourite hookah and two pounds of good tobacco.

However, he did not die. With time he recovered his senses. He no longer refused food, and gradually got as strong as he had formerly been. But now comes another curious feature of the case. He solemnly averred that he had no recollection of what he had said or done in the matter of Subratun. He protested that he had been bewitched by some enemy, who had given him poison to eat, and had made him ridiculous in the eyes of everybody. He could not be prevailed upon to acknowledge his own responsibility for his sayings and doings; stoutly maintaining that he had been under evil influences and not his own master.

When Ghusseetah got mad—as his wife called it—and could not do his work, I inquired into the circumstances of the case, and then, without any difficulty or cross-questioning, learnt all the particulars detailed above. I was careful to note down immediately the facts as they were communicated to me, for they seemed to afford a glimpse of the inner life of the people which might be as interesting to others as it was to me.

VI.

THIEF-CATCHING.

THIEF-CATCHING carried out in a thoroughly Indian way has its peculiarities not devoid of interest.

Fifteen rupees had been abstracted out of a box in my study. I called my servants together, made know the loss, and threatened a police investigation. What such an inquiry involved the servants were well aware. The faces of those upon whom, from the nature of their duties, suspicion would naturally fall, showed only too well that their imaginations were already busy, conjuring up the disgraceful scene in which the native constables would endeavour to elicit the truth from them, literally at the point of the baton, dug into their unfortunate sides. The magistrate and his sentence upon the offender are secondary considerations in these cases. It is the preliminary police investigation that is most dreaded. I had not the slightest intention of handing my servants over to the tender mercies of the constables. My threat was merely intended to frighten out a confession, if possible, and I willingly acceded to a proposal, made by one or two of the servants, to investigate the matter themselves.

After performing certain religious ablutions, the cook, a grave Mussulman much respected in the household, produced a shoe, into the inside of which he stuck a shoemaker's awl, and with this instrument proceeded with great solemnity to the detection of the thief. The names of the several servants were written upon separate scraps of paper. The cook and one other man, acting jointly, lifted the shoe, each man applying only one finger under the round head of the handle of the awl. Suspended in this way, the scraps of paper with the servants' names were dropped into the shoe in succession, and it was well understood by all present that when the thief's name was put into the shoe it would turn round in a horizontal plane. It turned very distinctly at the name of a certain servant, and, as might have been expected, the result was received by him with anything but satisfaction. However, he was a Hindu, and affected to believe that this Mussulman mode of thief-catching was not quite fair, at any rate to Hindus, and it was agreed that a reference should be made on the subject to a Brahman in the city, whose verdict would be considered conclusive. Next day the Brahman was appealed to. He went through a form of divination, and then oracularly declared that the thief was a man; not a woman, that he was more than thirty and less than forty years of age, and so on. He very impressively affirmed his ability to lay hands on the thief there and then, but he refrained from doing so, advising the culprit to restore the money within the next two days, otherwise he would expose him and let the law take its course. The Brahman's descrip-

tion of the thief did to some extent tally with that of the man already pointed out by the cook's divining shoe, and confirmed the suspicion against him. Next morning the suspected man came and informed me that the money was in the inner pocket of the broadcloth coat worn by a fellow-servant, a boy of about fourteen years of age. The boy was called, ostensibly to perform some ordinary duty, and upon being suddenly asked what was in his pocket, appeared ready to drop with fear. Seven rupees were found in his pocket, and many were the stories he told in regard to the manner in which he had come into possession of them; but he at last affirmed, and stuck to the assertion, that they had been given to him for safe custody by the suspected man, who declared his intention of replacing them in the box whence he had abstracted them as soon as a favourable opportunity presented itself. Anyhow, between the shoe and the Brahman, the thief or thieves—for I believe the pair were confederates—were detected, and a portion at least of the missing money recovered with little trouble.

VII.

A YOUTHFUL SAINT.

ATTRACTED by the voices of some people passing my window, and especially noticing a high treble voice, like that of a child, speaking in rather more authoritative tones than his years seemed to justify, I looked out and saw a small boy of about twelve years of age, dressed in clean clothes, attended by several of my servants, all apparently most attentive to him. One man, of whom he inquired where his mangoes were, ran off at once, apparently to fetch them, but really to purchase some in the bazaar. The youthful centre of this little group was sauntering in a very leisurely manner towards the gate, conversing with his companions, when suddenly, in the most capricious manner, he turned round and took an opposite direction towards the out-offices at the back of the house. His full face was now in view, and struck me strongly as being very wanting in intelligence, if not bearing visible traces of insanity.

The boy had been living in my out-houses for two or three days. He had come in there of his own accord, and was being feasted and fêted to the full extent of their means by my poor but ever improvi-

dent domestics, who were never tired of supplying his wants or humouring his caprices: for, it would seem, the boy was a remarkable person, one especially favoured by Allah.

In his native village near Gujranwallah, his father had recently been engaged in erecting the mud walls of a hut for himself. His humble, if useful, work required a plentiful supply of water, and this the owner of the well hard by absolutely refused to give him. Without water the work could not be carried on. The builder was in great perplexity, when his young son came to his rescue with words of comfort, telling him that what his fellow-man refused Allah would give freely; and so saying, he planted his little foot down vigorously on the ground, out of which a spring of fresh water instantly welled up, and continues flowing to this day. So remarkable an event could not fail to attract attention. The spring became famous all through the neighbourhood. Visitors from near and far flocked to see it. It became a place of pilgrimage. The water was found to have wonderful curative power. Even leprosy was cured by bathing in it, and quantities were stored and carried away for the benefit of sufferers unable to come to the holy spot, where Allah had so remarkably manifested His power and His beneficent remembrance of the wants of the poor. One miserable leper, cured of his disease at the spring, carried away some of the water to Amritsar and sold it there to another sufferer from the same grievous affliction. The purchaser was duly restored to a sound condition by the use of the water; but alas, the mercenary vendor of God's precious, but freely given, gift of

healing was attacked again by the hideous malady as a punishment for his avarice.

As suddenly and capriciously as he came, so suddenly and capriciously the boy went away, and I lost all further trace of this interesting little worker of miracles, who, if he does not go mad, will perhaps hereafter add a new sect or sub-sect to the innumerable ones already flourishing in India.

VIII.

THE DAUGHTER-IN-LAW.

HAVING occasion one cold winter to pass close to the out-offices occupied by my servants, I noticed a young woman, I may say a girl, lightly clad, sitting outside in the keen frosty air eating her solitary dinner. She was outside, and alone, because, forsooth, she might not eat in the presence of the male members of the family, who were enjoying their dinner, in warmth and comfort, within doors. The woman was the wife of my *dhoby*, or washerman, a Hindu of a low caste. I subsequently ascertained that the rule in this case is sometimes so far relaxed as to allow of the woman's eating with her back turned to her lords and masters. Nor do these rules hold only in the case of the inferior castes or the lower orders. They are of universal application in India. "It is a well-known fact," says a Bengali writer, "that Hindoo males and females do not take their meals together; . . . it is held highly unbecoming in a grown-up female to be seen eating by a male member of the family. . . . The choicest part of the food is offered in the first instance to the males, and the residue is kept for the females.[1]

[1] "The Hindoos as They Are," by Shib Chunder Bose, pp. 8, 9.

A short time after the incident referred to above, my attention was attracted by a woman's voice crying in loud and pitiful tones. In an Indian household such an event would generally be noticed only by a peremptory order to "stop that noise," accompanied by a threat of summary ejectment or worse punishment in the event of a repetition of the nuisance. But having nothing particular on hand, I thought it worth while to go down to the out-offices, which were at some distance from my dwelling-house, and make inquiries into the uproar. As soon as I appeared, the servants began relating a doleful tale of systematic oppression and cruelty. The victim was the girl I had previously seen turned out to eat her dinner in the cold. The oppressor was her mother-in-law. Never a day went, so said the servants, without the young woman being soundly thrashed, with a stick if it were at hand, or with blows and kicks, as might be convenient. The reasons for these assaults were many and various; no fault, no offence, neglect or oversight, being too trivial to excite the mother-in-law's anger and cause her to become violent. I could not find out what was the real ground for the assault on this particular occasion, but it was quite apparent that the girl had been severely beaten about the face, as it was swollen up, and there was some blood about her person. The mother-in-law was not to be found, and the girl's husband, in a most abject way, tried to explain that the punishment was well merited, as his wife had not performed the tasks which had been allotted her. His fellow-servants stated that the young woman was up every

day hours before daylight to grind the corn for the entire household; that she had to sweep the house and lay on a fresh wash of clay over the floor every day; that she had to cook the food, carry it herself two-and-a-half miles to the river where the washermen were engaged, bring back the plates, and cook the evening meal against the return of the dhobies. According to all accounts she worked early and late, but could never please her mother-in-law. I insisted that the old woman should be produced. Her son swore she had gone out; presently, however, I discovered that she was concealed in one of the rooms, and she was brought forward much against her will. The old witch—I had never seen her before—was a wiry woman about fifty years of age, with ill-nature stamped on every feature of her face. I scolded her for her cruelty to the girl; I pointed out that her daughter-in-law was no slave, and that she had no legal right whatever to strike her. But the old hag was not to be put down so easily. She assumed a defiant air, and said she had spent her money in getting the girl and would have her work out of her. To argue with the old termagant was useless. "When a master does not get his work done, doesn't he beat his servants? and when I don't get my work done I shall of course beat the girl." Such was her contention. She insisted that as she had spent her money in getting the girl for her son, she had a clear right to her services. The girl was from a distant village, and possibly her parents had received fifteen or twenty rupees on the occasion of handing her over to her husband, and had, in all likelihood, spent the amount in providing a simple feast of rice and

sugar for their rustic friends and neighbours. Yet on the strength of this small sum of money the girl was a real slave to her mother-in-law. I threatened to send for the police, to clear up this point for her, but the old woman was not to be intimidated. The son stood by making apologies with his palms joined together in the most abject manner, but the old witch affirmed boldly, and with a significance not to be mistaken, that whatever the police might do, the *Sirkar* would not take her daughter-in-law away from her. The girl had not a word to say. With her head bowed down and her face almost quite concealed, she sat scrubbing a brass *lotah*, as if afraid that any interruption of her labours would entail further punishment. Without doubt she considered herself a purchased slave, a view in which the bystanders apparently acquiesced, though they thought she ought to be treated with a little less cruelty. And as she sat there, in her coarse, filthy rags, she presented a sad contrast to her mother-in-law in her green and black chintz petticoat, white bodice, and red sheet. The contrast between the two women was so marked, that I began to take note of the appearance of the other members of the family. The men were dressed in clean white clothes, the mother-in-law as already stated, and her own little girl in a nice yellow petticoat, with a white sheet over her head. All looked clean and respectable, except the young wife, the domestic drudge, the slave that had been purchased for so many rupees, silently busy cleaning the brass pot even while her wrongs were being discussed in her presence. I began seriously to regret my interference in the

matter, I foresaw that the girl's fate would not be improved by my advocacy. To let the young wife know her legal rights was useless, for her mind, oppressed by the customs of her people, could not rise to a conception of them. She never dreamed of freedom. She was not indignant at, or humiliated by, being abused and ill-treated publicly. She simply cried out when she was beaten, just as a dog might do. The fellow-servants were not outraged at the conduct of the old woman in thrashing her daughter-in-law or exacting task-work from her. That was customary. They merely thought she was rather hard upon the girl.

Had the case been made over to the police, the girl would probably have said she had nothing to complain about, and that the blow in her face had been caused by a fall.

Month after month the ill-starred girl was beaten and starved by her brutal mother-in-law, without any interference on the part of the husband or other member of the family, and although she did not lay violent hands upon herself,[1] came eventually to an untimely end by neglecting, in times of illness, the sympathetic advice of her neighbours, as well

[1] "It is a well-known fact that females who commit suicide in India are generally between the ages of twelve and twenty, and that these acts may almost always be traced to the oppression of cruel mothers-in-law. That the daughter-in-law is, in every Hindu household, regarded as a servant, is evident from the fact that when the bridegroom is about to proceed to the house of his bride on the occasion of the marriage ceremonies, his mother asks him where he is going to, and he replies with the prescribed formula: 'To bring in your maid-servant.'"—"The Hindus as They Are," by Shib Chunder Bose, p. 57.

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as every precaution which common sense would suggest. Deserted by her husband, and cruelly ill-used by her mother-in-law even when the chill hand of death was unmistakably upon her, the poor girl died as a dog might die, uncared for and *alone*. Often had she been heard to wish herself dead, and to console herself with the thought that she would return as a *choorail* to persecute and destroy her tyrant, relying upon a widely spread superstition, which sometimes has the wholesome effect of restraining, in some degree, the hand of the domestic oppressor. But in the case I am writing about the vengeance of the poor dead woman was completely and effectually guarded against by means of *appropriate ceremonies*. At the various halting places to the grave mustard seed had been scattered about, and a few iron tacks had been driven into the ground with the prayer that the spirit of the deceased might not be permitted to disturb the living. The ghost of the injured woman might haunt the graveyard, but in seeking its former earthly habitation it would have to retrace the road along which its corpse had been borne. Here it would always find a spiritual garden of mustard plants, and, beguiled into collecting the flowers, would lose the precious hours of the night, and be forced by approaching dawn to hasten back to the land of the dead.